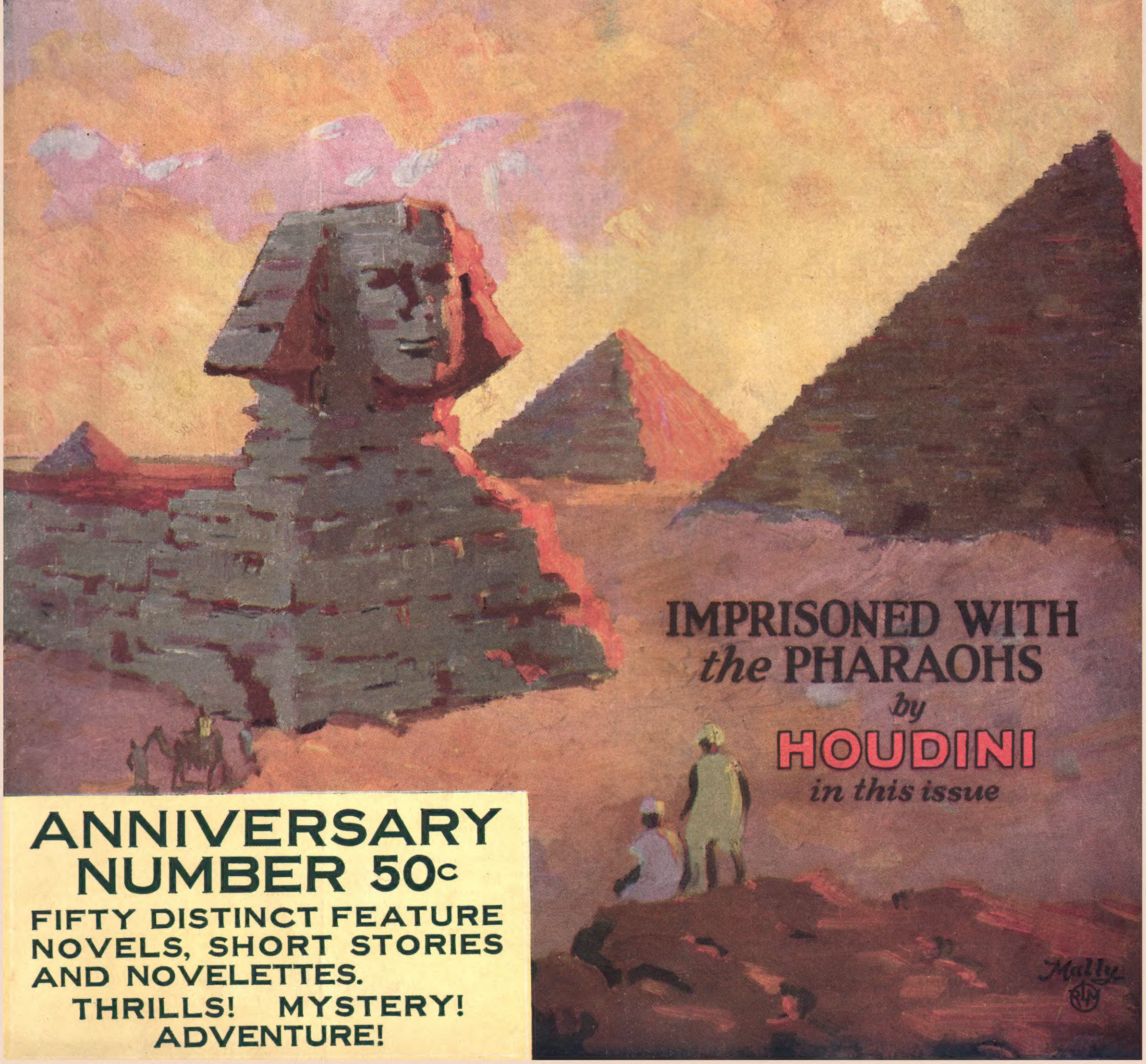
MAY, JUNE, JULY, 1924

Weird Tales

THE UNIQUE MAGAZINE



IMPRISONED WITH *the* PHARAOHS

by

HOUDINI

in this issue

ANNIVERSARY NUMBER 50c

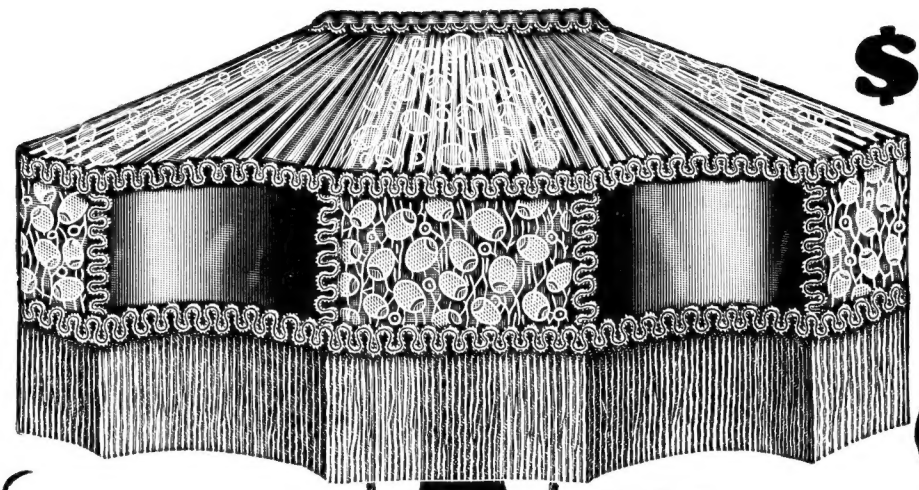
FIFTY DISTINCT FEATURE NOVELS, SHORT STORIES AND NOVELETTES.

THRILLS! MYSTERY! ADVENTURE!

WEIRD TALES

Printed in U.S.A.

Vol. IV, No. 2. 50c



$1.00 Down

Brings This

Gas or Electric

The Lamp—

Comes equipped for choice of gas or electricity. Has 2-light Benjamin socket for electricity only, with 8-foot silk cord ready for use; or comes with 6-foot rubber hose, burner, mantle and chimney for gas.

Mahogany Finish

Standard is 60 in. high, 3 in. in diameter. Highly polished French mahogany finish.

The Shade—

Made in Fifth Avenue design, 24 in. in diameter, of delft blue silk, shirred top, alternating plain and fancy art silk panels. Twelve panels in all, tinsel braid border, with four inch Chenille fringe. American beauty shirred lining. The harmonious color scheme gives effect of red light shining through a blue haze—a rich warm light. Shipping weight, 27 pounds.

Marshall Silky Fringe Pull-Cords

Also pair of Marshall silky fringe cords with 1½ in. silky fringed tassels, giving an added luxurious effect.

For gas use, order by No. G6332NA.

For electricity, order by No. G6333NA.

Send only $1 with the coupon, $2 monthly. Total Bargain Price for lamp and shade, $19.85.

Free Bargain Catalog

Shows thousands of bargains in home furnishings: furniture, jewelry, rugs, curtains, phonographs, stoves, dishes, aluminum ware, etc. All sold on easy terms. Catalog sent free, with or without order. See the coupon.

Floor Lamp With 5th Ave. Silk Shade

Here is something you have always wanted—a beautiful floor lamp with handsome and elegant Fifth Avenue silk shade—to add an extra tone of elegance and luxury to your home. On this generous offer you can see just how this floor lamp and silk shade will look in your home, without risking anything. Send only $1.00 with the coupon below, and we will send it complete to your home on approval, equipped for use with either gas or electricity. We take all the risk.

30 Days Trial

When the lamp outfit comes, use it freely for 30 days. See how beautifully the colorings of the handsome silk shade blend and harmonize with everything in the home. How *useful* it is, too—so handy for reading, can be moved around with ease to furnish a beautiful light and rich warmth and coziness to any room in the house. If after 30 days trial you decide not to keep the lamp, just return it at our expense and we will refund your $1.00 deposit, plus any freight or express you paid. You cannot lose a single penny.

$2.00 a Month

If you discover that this lamp is a tremendous bargain at the price we ask and you decide to keep it, send only $2.00 a month until you have paid the total bargain price of $19.85. Yes, only $19.85 for this luxurious lamp and silk shade complete. Compare this value with anything you could buy locally at anywhere near the same price—*even for spot cash!* Straus & Schram gives you this bargain price and almost a year to pay. We trust honest people anywhere in U. S. No discount for cash; nothing extra for credit. *No C. O. D.*

Price Slashed!

Decide now to **see** this beautiful floor lamp and silk shade in your home on approval on this price smashing offer. Think how the nickels and dimes slip away for useless things; save them for something **worth while** that will give satisfaction for years. Send coupon with only $1.00 now! Satisfaction guaranteed.

Send Coupon NOW!

STRAUS & SCHRAM, Dept. 3935 Chicago, Ill.

MAIL THIS COUPON NOW!

STRAUS & SCHRAM Dept. 3935 CHICAGO

Enclosed find $1.00. Ship special advertised Floor Lamp and Silk Shade as checked below. I am to have 30 days free trial. If I keep the lamp, I will send $2.00 a month. If not satisfied, I am to return the lamp and shade within 30 days and you are to refund my $1.00 plus any transportation charges I paid.

☐ ***Gas* Floor Lamp No. G 6332NA, $19.85.**
☐ ***Electric* Floor Lamp No. G 6333NA, $19.85**

Name.....

Street, R. F. D. or Box No......

Shipping Point.....

Post Office..... *State*.....

If you want ONLY our free catalog of home furnishings, mark X here ☐

Why WEIRD TALES?

UP TO THE day the first issue of WEIRD TALES was placed on the stands, stories of the sort you read between these covers each month were taboo in the publishing world. Each magazine had its fixed policy. Some catered to mixed classes of readers, most specialized on certain types of stories, but all agreed in excluding the genuinely weird stories. The greatest weird story and one of the greatest short stories ever written, "The Murders of the Rue Morgue," would not have stood the ghost of a show in any modern editorial office previous to the launching of WEIRD TALES. Had Edgar Allan Poe produced that masterpiece in this generation he would have searched in vain for a publisher before the advent of this magazine.

And so every issue of this magazine fulfills its mission, printing the kind of stories you like to read—stories which you have no opportunity of reading in other periodicals because of their orthodox editorial policies.

We make no pretension of publishing, or even trying to publish a magazine that will please everybody. What we have done, and will continue to do, is to gather around us an ever increasing body of readers who appreciate the weird, the bizarre, the unusual—who recognize true art in fiction.

The writing of the common run of stories today has, unfortunately for American literature, taken on the character of an exact science. Such stories are entirely mechanical, conforming to fixed rules. A good analogy might be found in the music of the electric piano. It is technically perfect, mechanically true, but lacking in expression. As is the case with any art when mechanics are permitted to dominate, the soul of the story is crushed—suffocated beneath a weight of technique. True art—the expression of the soul—is lacking.

The types of stories we have published, and will continue to publish may be placed under two classifications. The first of these is the story of psychic phenomena or the occult story. These stories are written from three viewpoints: The viewpoint of the spiritualist who believes that such phenomena are produced by spirits of the departed, the scientist, who believes they are either the result of fraud, or may be explained by known, little known, or perhaps unknown phases of natural law, and the neutral investigator, who simply records the facts, lets them speak for themselves, and holds no brief for either side.

The second classification might be termed "Highly Imaginative Stories." These are stories of advancement in the sciences and the arts to which the generation of the writer who creates them has not attained. All writers of such stories are prophets, and in the years to come, many of their prophecies will come true.

There are a few people who sniff at such stories. They delude themselves with the statement that they are too practical to read such stuff. We cannot, nor do we aim to please such readers. A man for whom this generation has found no equal in his particular field of investigation, none other than the illustrious Huxley, wrote a suitable answer for them long ago. He said: "Those who refuse to go beyond fact rarely get as far as fact."

Writers of highly imaginative fiction have, in times past, drawn back the veil of centuries, allowing their readers to look at the wonders of the present. True, these visions were often distorted, as by a mirror with a curved surface, but just as truly were they actual reflections of the present. It is the mission of WEIRD TALES to find present day writers who have this faculty, that our readers may glimpse the future—may be vouchsafed visions of the wonders that are to come.

Looking back over the vast sea of literature that has been produced since man began to record his thoughts, we find two types predominating—two types that have lived up to the present and will live on into the future: The weird story and the highly imaginative story. The greatest writers of history have been at their best when producing such stories; Homer, Shakespeare, Milton, Dante, Irving, Hawthorne, Poe, Verne, Dickens, Maeterlinck, Doyle, Wells, and scores of other lesser lights. Their weird and highly imaginative stories will live forever.

Shakespeare gave forceful expression to the creed of writers of the weird and highly imaginative, when he wrote the oft-quoted saying: "There are more things in Heaven and Earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

The writer of the highly imaginative story intuitively knows of the existence of these things, and endeavors to search them out. He has an unquenchable thirst for knowledge. He is at once, the scientist, the philosopher, and the poet. He evolves fancies from known facts, and new and startling facts are in turn evolved from the fancies. For him, in truth, as for no others less gifted "Stone walls do not a prison make." His ship of imagination will carry him the four thousand miles to the center of the earth, "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea," on a journey to another planet millions of miles distant, or on a trip through the Universe, measured only in millions of light years, with equal facility. Material obstacles cannot stay his progress. He laughs at those two bogies which have plagued mankind from time immemorial, time and space. Things without beginning and without end, which man is vainly trying to measure. Things that have neither length, breadth nor thickness, yet to which men would ascribe definite limits.

To the imaginative writer, the upper reaches of the ether, the outer limits of the palactic ring, the great void that gaps

Weird Tales, The Unique Magazine, published quarterly by The Rural Publishing Corp., 325 N. Capitol Ave., Indianapolis, Ind. Vol. 4, No. 2. Entered as second-class matter at the postoffice at Indianapolis, Ind., under the act of March 3, 1879, by The Rural Publishing Corp. *Copyright 1924 by The Rural Publishing Corp. All rights reserved.* *Subscription price, $2.00 a year in the United States, $2.50 in Canada. Single copies 50c. Manufactured in U. S. A. Issued in May, August, November and February.*

beyond, and the infinity of Universes that may, for all we know, lie still further on, are as accessible as his own garden. He flies to them in the ship of his imagination in less time than it takes a bee to flit from one flower to another on the same spike of a delphinium.

Some of the stories now being published in WEIRD TALES will live forever. Men, in the progressive ages to come, will wonder how it was possible that writers of the crude and uncivilized age known as the twentieth century could have had foreknowledge of the things that will have, by that time, come to pass. They will marvel, as they marvel even now, at the writings of Poe and Verne.

It has always been the human desire to experience new emotions and sensations without actual danger. A tale of horror is told for its own sake, and becomes an end in itself. It is appreciated most by those who are secure from peril.

Using the term in a wide sense, horror stories probably began with the magnificent story of the *Writing on the Wall at Belshazzar's Feast.* Following this were the *Book of Job,* the legends of the *Deluge* and the *Tower of Babel,* and *Saul's Visit to the Woman of Endor.* Byron once said the latter was the best ghost story ever written.

The ancient Hebrews used the element of fear in their writings to spur their heroes to superhuman power or to instill a moral truth. The sun stands still in the heavens that Joshua may prevail over his enemies.

The beginning of the English novel during the middle of the eighteenth century brought to light Fielding, Smollett, Sterne and several others. Since this time terror has never ceased to be used as a motive in fiction. This period marked the end of the Gothic Romance whose primary appeal was to women readers. Situations fraught with terror are frequent in *Jane Eyre.* The Brontes, however, never used the supernatural element to increase tension. Theirs are the terrors of actual life. Wilkie Collins wove elaborate plots of hair-raising events. Bram Stoker, Richard Marsh and Sax Rohmer do likewise. Conan Doyle realized that darkness and loneliness place us at the mercy of terror and he worked artfully on our fear of the unknown. The works of Rider Haggard combine strangeness, wonder, mystery and horror, as do those of Verne, Hitchens, Blackwood, Conrad, and others.

Charles Brockden Brown was the first American novelist to introduce supernatural occurrences and then trace them to natural causes. Like Mrs. Radcliffe, he was at the mercy of a conscience which forbade him to introduce spectres which he himself did not believe. Brown was deeply interested in morbid psychology and he took delight in tracing the working of the brain in times of emotional distress. His best works are *Edgar Huntly, Wieland* and *Ormond.*

The group of "Strange Stories by a Nervous Gentleman" in *Tales of a Traveler,* prove that Washington Irving was well versed in ghostly lore. He was wont to summon ghosts and spirits at will but could not refrain from receiving them in a jocose, irreverent mood. However, in the *Story of the German Student* he strikes a note of real horror.

Hawthorne was not a man of morose and gloomy temper. An irresistible impulse drove him toward the sombre and gloomy. In his *Notebook* he says: "I used to think that I could imagine all the passions, all the feelings and states of the heart and mind, but how little did I know! Indeed, we are but shadows, we are not endowed with real life, but all that seems most real about us is but the thinnest shadow of a dream—till the heart be touched."

The weird story of *The Hollow of the Three Hills,* the gloomy legend of *Ethan Brand* and the ghostly *White Old Maid* are typical of Hawthorne's mastery of the bizarre. His introduction of witches into *The Scarlet Letter,* and of mesmerism into *The Blithedale Romance* show that he was preoccupied with the terrors of magic and of the invisible world.

Hawthorne was concerned with mournful reflections, not frightful events. The mystery of death, not its terror, fascinated him. He never startled you with physical horror save possibly in *The House of the Seven Gables.* In the chapter, Judge Jaffery Pyncheon, Hawthorne, with grim and bitter irony, mocks and taunts the dead body of the judge until the ghostly pageantry of the dead Pyncheons—including at last Judge Jaffery himself with the fatal crimson stain on his neckcloth—fades away with the coming of daylight.

Edgar Allan Poe was penetrating the trackless regions of terror while Hawthorne was toying with spectral forms and "dark ideas." Where Hawthorne would have shrunk back, repelled and disgusted, Poe, wildly exhilarated by the anticipation of a new and excruciating thrill, forced his way onward. Both Poe and Hawthorne were fascinated by the thought of death. The hemlock and cypress overshadowed Poe night and day and he describes death accompanied by its direst physical and mental agonies. Hawthorne wrote with finished perfection, unerringly choosing the right word; Poe experimented with language, painfully acquiring a studied form of expression which was remarkably effective at times. In his *Masque of the Red Death* we are forcibly impressed with the skilful arrangement of words, the alternation of long and short sentences, the use of repetition, and the deliberate choice of epithets.

But enough of Poe. His works are immortal and stand today as the most widely read of any American author. The publishers of WEIRD TALES hope they will be instrumental in discovering or uncovering some American writer who will leave to posterity what Poe and Hawthorne have bequeathed to the present generation. Perhaps in the last year we have been instrumental in furnishing an outlet to writers whose works would not find a ready market in the usual channels. The reception accorded us has been cordial and we feel that we will survive. We dislike to predict the future of the horror story. We believe its powers are not yet exhausted. The advance of science proves this. It will lead us into unexplored labyrinths of terror and the human desire to experience new emotions will always be with us.

Dr. Frank Crane says: "What I write is my tombstone." And again—"As for me, let my bones and flesh be burned, and the ashes dropped in the moving waters, and if my name shall live at all, let it be found among Books, the only garden of forget-me-nots, the only human device for perpetuating this personality."

So WEIRD TALES has, from its inception, and will in the future, endeavor to find and publish those stories that will make their writers immortal. It will play its humble but necessary part in perpetuating those personalities that are worthy to be crowned as immortals.

A Thrilling Adventure of the Gizeh Plateau

IMPRISONED WITH THE PHARAOHS

By HOUDINI

MYSTERY attracts mystery. Ever since the wide appearance of my name as a performer of unexplained feats, I have encountered strange narratives and events which my calling has led people to link with my interests and activities. Some of these have been trivial and irrelevant, some deeply dramatic and absorbing, some productive of weird and perilous experiences and some involving me in exten-

sive scientific and historical research. Many of these matters I have told and shall continue to tell very freely; but there is one of which I speak with great reluctance, and which I am now relating only after a session of grilling persuasion from the publishers of this magazine, who had heard vague rumors of it from other members of my family.

The hitherto guarded subject pertains to my non-professional visit to Egypt fourteen years ago, and has been avoided by me for several reasons. For one thing, I am averse to exploiting certain unmistakably actual facts and conditions obviously unknown to the myriad tourists who throng about the pyramids and apparently secreted with much diligence by the authorities at Cairo, who cannot be wholly ignorant of them. For another thing, I dislike to recount an incident in which my own fantastic imagination must have played so great a part. What I saw—or thought I saw—certainly did not take place; but is rather to be viewed as a result of my then recent readings in Egyptology, and of the speculations anent this theme which my environment naturally prompted. These imaginative stimuli, magnified by the excitement of an actual event terrible enough in itself, undoubtedly gave rise to the culminating horror of that grotesque night so long past.

In January, 1910, I had finished a professional engagement in England and signed a contract for a tour of Australian theatres. A liberal time being allowed for the trip, I determined to make the most of it in the sort of travel which chiefly interests me; so accompanied by my wife I drifted pleasantly down the Continent and embarked at Marseilles on the P. & O. Steamer "Malwa," bound for Port Said. From that point I proposed to visit the principal historical localities of lower Egypt before leaving finally for Australia.

The voyage was an agreeable one, and enlivened by many of the amusing incidents which befall a magical performer apart from his work. I had intended, for the sake of quiet travel, to keep my name a secret; but was goaded into betraying myself by a fellow-magician whose anxiety to astound the passengers with ordinary tricks tempted me to duplicate and exceed his feats in a manner quite destructive of my incognito. I mention this because of its ultimate effect—an effect I should have foreseen before unmasking to a shipload of tourists about to scatter throughout the Nile Valley. What it did was to herald my identity wherever I subsequently went, and deprive my wife and me of all the placid inconspicuousness we had sought. Traveling to seek curiosities, I was often forced to stand inspection as a sort of curiosity myself!

We had come to Egypt in search of the picturesque and the mystically impressive, but found little enough when the ship edged up to Port Said and discharged its passengers in small boats. Low dunes of sand, bobbing buoys in shallow water, and a drearily European small town with nothing of interest save the great De Lesseps statue, made us anxious to get on to something more worth our while. After some discussion we decided to proceed at once to Cairo and the Pyramids, later going to Alexandria for the Australian boat and for whatever Graeco-Roman sights that ancient cosmopolitan metropolis might present.

The railway journey was tolerable enough, and consumed only four hours and a half. We saw much of the Suez Canal, whose route we followed as far as Ismailiya, and later had a taste of Old Egypt in our glimpse of the restored fresh-water canal of the Middle Empire. Then at least we saw Cairo glimmering through the growing dusk; a twinkling constellation which became a blaze as we halted at the great Gare Centrale.

But once more disappointment seemed to await us, for all that we beheld was European save the costumes and the crowds. A prosaic subway led to a square teeming with carriages, taxicabs, and trolley-cars, and gorgeous with electric lights shining on tall buildings; whilst the very theatre where I was vainly requested to play and which I later attended as a spectator, had recently been renamed the "American Cosmograph." We stopped at Shepherd's Hotel, reached in a taxi that sped along broad, smartly built-up streets; and amidst the perfect service of its restaurant, elevators, and generally Anglo-American luxuries the mysterious East and immemorial past seemed very far away.

The next day, however, precipitated us delightfully into the heart of the Arabian Nights atmosphere; and in the winding ways and exotic skyline of Cairo, the Bagdad of Haroun-al-Raschid seemed to live again. Guided by our Baedeker, we had struck east past the Exbekiych Gardens along the Mouski in quest of the native quarter, and were soon in the hands of a clamorous cicerone who—notwithstanding later developments—was assuredly a master at his trade. Not until afterward did I see that I should have applied at the hotel for a licensed guide. This man, a shaven, peculiarly hollow-voiced, and relatively cleanly fellow who looked like a Pharaoh and called himself "Abdul Reis el Drogman," appeared to have much power over others of his kind; though subsequently the police professed not to know him, and to suggest that *reis* is merely a name for any person in authority, whilst "Drogman" is obviously no more than a clumsy modification of the word for a leader of tourist parties—*dragoman*.

Abdul led us among such wonders as we had before only read and dreamed of. Old Cairo is itself a story-book and a dream—labyrinths of narrow alleys redolent of aromatic secrets; Arabesque balconies and oriels nearly meeting above the cobbled streets; maelstroms of Oriental traffic with strange cries, cracking whips, rattling carts, jingling money, and braying donkeys; kaleidoscopes of polychrome robes, veils, turbans, and tarbushes; water-carriers and dervishes, dogs and cats, soothsayers and barbers; and over all the whining of blind beggars crouched in alcoves, and the sonorous chanting of muezzins from minarets limned delicately against a sky of deep, unchanging blue.

The roofed, quieter bazaars were hardly less alluring. Spice, perfume, incense, beads, rugs, silks, and brass—old Mahmoud Suleiman squats cross-legged amidst his gummy bottles while chattering youths pulverize mustard in the hollowed-out capital of an ancient classic column—a Roman Corinthian, perhaps from neighboring Heliopolis, where Augustus stationed one of his three Egyptian legions. Antiquity begins to mingle with exoticism. And then the mosques and the museum—we saw them all, and tried not to let our Arabian revel succumb to the darker charm of Pharaonic Egypt which the museum's priceless treasures offered. That was to be our climax, and for the present we concentrated on the mediaeval Saracenic glories of the Caliphs whose magnificent tomb-mosques form a glittering faery necropolis on the edge of the Arabian Desert.

At length Abdul took us along the Sharia Mohammed Ali to the ancient mosque of Sultan Hassan, and the towel-flanked Bab-el-Azab, beyond which climbs the steep-walled pass to the mighty citadel that Saladin himself built with the stones of forgotten pyramids. It was sunset when we scaled that cliff, circled the modern mosque of Mohammed Ali, and looked down from the dizzy parapet over mystic Cairo—mystic Cairo all golden with its carven domes, its ethereal minarets, and its flaming gardens. Far over the city

towered the great Roman dome of the new museum; and beyond it—across the cryptic yellow Nile that is the mother of aeons and dynasties—lurked the menacing sands of the Libyan Desert, undulant and iridescent and evil with older arcana. The red sun sank low, bringing the relentless chill of Egyptian dusk; and as it stood poised on the world's rim like that ancient god of Heliopolis—Re-Harakhte, the Horizon-Sun—we saw silhouetted against its vermeil holocaust the black outlines of the Pyramids of Gizeh—the palaeogean tombs that were hoary with a thousand years when Tut-Ankh-Amen mounted his golden throne in distant Thebes. Then we knew that we were done with Saracen Cairo, and that we must taste the deeper mysteries of primal Egypt—the black Kem of Re and Amen, Isis and Osiris.

The next morning we visited the Pyramids, riding out in a Victoria across the great Nile bridge with its bronze lions, the island of Ghizereh with its massive lebbakh trees, and the smaller English bridge to the western shore. Down the shore road we drove, between great rows of lebbakhs and past the vast Zoological Gardens to the suburb of Gizeh, where a new bridge to Cairo proper has since been built. Then, turning inland along the Sharia-el-Haram, we crossed a region of glassy canals and shabby native villages till before us loomed the objects of our quest, cleaving the mists of dawn and forming inverted replicas in the roadside pools. Forty centuries, as Napoleon had told his campaigners there, indeed looked down upon us.

The road now rose abruptly, till we finally reached our place of transfer between the trolley station and the Mena House Hotel. Abdul Reis, who capably purchased our Pyramid tickets, seemed to have an understanding with the crowding, yelling, and offensive Bedouins who inhabited a squalid mud village some distance away and pestiferously assailed every traveler; for he kept them very decently at bay and secured an excellent pair of camels for us, himself mounting a donkey and assigning the leadership of our animals to a group of men and boys more expensive than useful. The area to be traversed was so small that camels were hardly needed, but we did not regret adding to our experience this troublesome form of desert navigation.

The Pyramids stand on a high rock plateau, this group forming next to the northernmost of the series of regal and aristocratic cemeteries built in the neighborhood of the extinct capital Memphis, which lay on the same side of the Nile, somewhat south of Gizeh, and which flourished between 3400 and 2000 B. C. The greatest pyramid, which lies nearest the modern road, was built by King Cheops or Khufu about 2800 B. C., and stands more than 450 feet in perpendicular height. In a line southwest from this are successively the Second Pyramid, built a generation later by King Khephren, and though slightly smaller, looking even larger because set on higher ground, and the radically smaller Third Pyramid of King Mycerinus, built about 2700 B. C. Near the edge of the plateau and due east of the Second Pyramid, with a face probably altered to form a colossal portrait of Khephren, its royal restorer, stands the monstrous Sphinx—mute, sardonic, and wise beyond mankind and memory.

Minor pyramids and the traces of ruined minor pyramids are found in several places, and the whole plateau is pitted with the tombs of dignitaries of less than royal rank. These latter were originally marked by *mastabas*, or stone bench-like structures above the deep burial shafts, as found in other Memphian cemeteries and exemplified by Perneb's Tomb in the Metropolitan Museum of New York. At Gizeh, however, all such visible things have been swept away by time and pillage; and only the rock-hewn shafts, either sand-filled or cleared out by archaeologists, remain to attest their former existence. Connected with each tomb was a chapel in which priests and relatives offered food and prayer to the hovering *ka* or vital principle of the deceased. The small tombs have their chapels contained in their stone *mastabas* or superstructures, but the mortuary chapels of the pyramids, where regal Pharaohs lay, were separate temples, each to the east of its corresponding pyramid, and connected by a causeway to a massive gate-chapel or propylon at the edge of the rock plateau.

The gate-chapel leading to the Second Pyramid, nearly buried in the drifting sands, yawns subterraneously southeast of the Sphinx. Persistent tradition dubs it the "Temple of the Sphinx"; and it may perhaps be rightly called such if the Sphinx indeed represents the Second Pyramid's builder Khephren. There are unpleasant tales of the Sphinx before Khephren—but whatever its elder features were, the monarch replaced them with his own that men might look at the colossus without fear. It was in the great gateway-temple that the life-size diorite statue of Khephren now in the Cairo museum was found; a statue before which I stood in awe when I beheld it. Whether the whole edifice is now excavated I am not certain, but in 1910 most of it was below ground, with the entrance heavily barred at night. Germans were in charge of the work, and the war or other things may have stopped them. I would give much, in view of my experience and of certain Bedouin whisperings discredited or unknown in Cairo, to know what has developed in connection with a certain well in a transverse gallery where statues of the Pharaoh were found in curious juxtaposition to the statues of baboons.

The road, as we traversed it on our camels that morning, curved sharply past the wooden police quarters, post office, drug store, and shops on the left, and plunged south and east in a complete bend that scaled the rock plateau and brought us face to face with the desert under the lee of the Great Pyramid. Past Cyclopean masonry we rode, rounding the eastern face and looking down ahead into a valley of minor pyramids beyond which the eternal Nile glistened to the east, and the eternal desert shimmered to the west. Very close loomed the three major pyramids, the greatest devoid of outer casing and showing its bulk of great stones, but the others retaining here and there the neatly fitted covering which had made them smooth and finished in their day.

Presently we descended toward the Sphinx, and sat silent beneath the spell of those terrible unseeing eyes. On the vast stone breast we faintly discerned the emblem of Re-Harakhte, for whose image the Sphinx was mistaken in a late dynasty; and though sand covered the tablet between the great paws, we recalled what Thutmosis IV inscribed thereon, and the dream he had when a prince. It was then that the smile of the Sphinx vaguely displeased us, and made us wonder about the legends of subterranean passages beneath the monstrous creature, leading down, down, to depths none might dare hint at—depths connected with mysteries older than the dynastic Egypt we excavate, and having a sinister relation to the persistence of abnormal, animal-headed gods in the ancient Nilotic pantheon. Then, too, it was I asked myself an idle question whose hideous significance was not to appear for many an hour.

Other tourists now began to overtake us, and we moved on to the sand-choked Temple of the Sphinx, fifty yards to the southeast, which I have previously mentioned as the great gate of the causeway to the Second Pyramid's mortuary chapel on the plateau. Most of it was still underground, and although we dis-

mounted and descended through a modern passageway to its alabaster corridor and pillared hall, I felt that Abdul and the local German attendant had not shown us all there was to see. After this we made the conventional circuit of the pyramid plateau, examining the Second Pyramid and the peculiar ruins of its mortuary chapel to the east, the Third Pyramid and its miniature southern satellites and ruined eastern chapel, the rock tombs and honeycombings of the fourth and fifth dynasties, and the famous Campbell's Tomb whose shadowy shaft sinks precipitously for fifty-three feet to a sinister sarcophagus which one of our camel-drivers divested of the cumbering sand after a vertiginous descent by rope.

Cries now assailed us from the Great Pyramid, where Bedouins were besieging a party of tourists with offers of guidance to the top, or of displays of speed in the performance of solitary trips up and down. Seven minutes is said to be the record for such an ascent and descent, but many lusty sheiks and sons of sheiks assured us they could cut it to five if given the requisite impetus of liberal *baksheesh*. They did not get this impetus, though we did let Abdul take us up, thus obtaining a view of unprecedented magnificence which included not only remote ond glittering Cairo with its crowned Citadel and background of gold-violet hills, but all the pyramids of the Memphian district, as well, from Abu Roash on the north to the Dashur on the south. The Sakkara step-pyramid, which marks the evolution of the low *mastaba* into the true pyramid, showed clearly and alluringly in the sandy distance. It is close to this transition-monument that the famed Tomb of Perneb was found—more than four hundred miles north of the Theban rock valley where Tut-Ankh-Amen sleeps. Again I was forced to silence through sheer awe. The prospect of such antiquity, and the secrets each hoary monument seemed to hold and brood over, filled me with a reverence and sense of immensity nothing else ever gave me.

Fatigued by our climb, and disgusted with the importunate Bedouins whose actions seemed to defy every rule of taste, we omitted the arduous detail of entering the cramped interior passages of any of the pyramids, though we saw several of the hardiest tourists preparing for the suffocating crawl through Cheops' mightiest memorial. As we dismissed and overpaid our local bodyguard and drove back to Cairo with Abdul Reis under the afternoon sun, we half regretted the omission we had made. Such fascinating things were whispered about lower pyramid passages not in the guide books; passages whose entrances had been hastily blocked up and concealed by certain uncommunicative archaeologists who had found and begun to explore them. Of course, this whispering was largely baseless on the face of it; but it was curious to reflect how persistently visitors were forbidden to enter the Pyramids at night, or to visit the lowest burrows and crypt of the Great Pyramid. Perhaps in the latter case it was the psychological effect which was feared—the effect on the visitor of feeling himself huddled down beneath a gigantic world of solid masonry; joined to the life he has known by the merest tube, in which he may only crawl, and which any accident or evil design might block. The whole subject seemed so weird and alluring that we resolved to pay the pyramid plateau another visit at the earliest possible opportunity. For me this opportunity came much earlier than I expected.

That evening the members of our party feeling somewhat tired after the strenuous programme of the day, I went alone with Abdul Reis for a walk through the picturesque Arab quarter. Though I had seen it by day, I wished to study the alleys and bazaars in the dusk, when rich shadows and mellow gleams of light would add to their glamour and fantastic illusion. The native crowds were thinning, but were still very noisy and numerous when we came upon a knot of reveling Bedouins in the Suk-en-Nahhasin, or bazaar of the coppersmiths. Their apparent leader, an insolent youth with heavy features and saucily cocked tarbush, took some notice of us; and evidently recognized with no great friendliness my competent but admittedly supercilious and sneeringly disposed guide. Perhaps, I thought, he resented that odd reproduction of the Sphinx's half smile which I had often remarked with amused irritation; or perhaps he did not like the hollow and sepulchral resonance of Abdul's voice. At any rate, the exchange of ancestrally opprobrious language became very brisk; and before long Ali Ziz, as I heard the stranger called when called by no worse name, began to pull violently at Abdul's robe, an action quickly reciprocated, and leading to a spirited scuffle in which both combatants lost their sacredly cherished headgear and would have reached an even direr condition had I not intervened and separated them by main force.

My interference, at first seemingly unwelcome on both sides, succeeded at last in effecting a truce. Sullenly each belligerent composed his wrath and his attire; and with an assumption of dignity as profound as it was sudden, the two formed a curious pact of honour which I soon learned is a custom of great antiquity in Cairo—a pact for the settlement of their difference by means of a nocturnal fist fight atop the Great Pyramid, long after the departure of the last moonlight sightseer. Each duellist was to assemble a party of seconds, and the affair was to begin at midnight, proceeding by rounds in the most civilized possible fashion. In all this planning there was much which excited my interest. The fight itself promised to be unique and spectacular, while the thought of the scene on that hoary pile overlooking the antediluvian plateau of Gizeh under the wan moon of the pallid small hours appealed to every fiber of imagination in me. A request found Abdul exceedingly willing to admit me to his party of seconds; so that all the rest of the early evening I accompanied him to various dens in the most lawless regions of the town—mostly northeast of the Ezbekiyeh—where he gathered one by one a select and formidable band of congenial cutthroats as his pugilistic background.

Shortly after nine our party, mounted on donkeys bearing such royal or tourist-reminiscent names as "Rameses," "Mark Twain," "J. P. Morgan," and "Minnehaha," edged through street labyrinths both Oriental and Occidental, crossed the muddy and mast-forested Nile by the bridge of the bronze lions, and cantered philosophically between the lebbakhs on the road to Gizeh. Slightly over two hours were consumed by the trip, toward the end of which we passed the last of the returning tourists, saluted the last in-bound trolley-car, and were alone with the night and the past and the spectral moon.

Then we saw the vast pyramids at the end of the avenue, ghoulish with a dim atavistical menace which I had not seemed to notice in the daytime. Even the smallest of them held a hint of the ghastly—for was it not in this that they had buried Queen Nitocris alive in the Sixth Dynasty; subtle Queen Nitocris, who once invited all her enemies to a feast in a temple below the Nile, and drowned them by opening the watergates? I recalled that the Arabs whisper things about Nitocris, and shun the Third Pyramid at certain phases of the moon. It must have been over her that Thomas Moore was brooding when he wrote of a thing muttered about by Memphian boatmen—

"'The subterranean nymph that dwells
'Mid sunless gems and glories hid—
The lady of the Pyramid!"

Early as we were, Ali Ziz and his party were ahead of us; for we saw their donkeys outlined against the desert plateau at Kafr-el-Haram; toward which squalid Arab settlement, close to the Sphinx, we had diverged instead of following the regular road to the Mena House, where some of the sleepy, inefficient police might have observed and halted us. Here, where filthy Bedouins stabled camels and donkeys in the rock tombs of Khephren's courtiers, we were led up the rocks and over the sand to the Great Pyramid, up whose time-worn sides the Arabs swarmed eagerly, Abdul Reis offering me the assistance I did not need.

As most travelers know, the actual apex of this structure has long been worn away, leaving a reasonably flat platform twelve yards square. On this eery pinnacle a squared circle was formed, and in a few moments the sardonic desert moon leered down upon a battle which, but for the quality of the ringside cries, might well have occurred at some minor athletic club in America. As I watched it, I felt that some of our less desirable institutions were not lacking; for every blow, feint, and defense bespoke "stalling" to my not inexperienced eye. It was quickly over, and despite my misgivings as to methods I felt a sort of proprietary pride when Abdul Reis was adjudged the winner.

Reconciliation was phenomenally rapid, and amidst the singing, fraternizing and drinking which followed, I found it difficult to realize that a quarrel had ever occurred. Oddly enough, I myself seemed to be more of a center of notice than the antagonists; and from my smattering of Arabic I judged that they were discussing my professional performances and escapes from every sort of manacle and confinement, in a manner which indicated not only a surprising knowledge of me, but a distinct hostility and scepticism concerning my feats of escape. It gradually dawned on me that the elder magic of Egypt did not depart without leaving traces, and that fragments of a strange secret lore and priestly cult-practices have survived surreptitiously amongst the fellaheen to such an extent that the prowess of a strange "hahwi" or magician is resented and disputed. I thought of how much my hollow-voiced guide Abdul Reis looked like an old Egyptian priest or Pharaoh or smiling Sphinx . . . and wondered.

Suddenly something happened which in a flash proved the correctness of my reflections and made me curse the denseness whereby I had accepted this night's events as other than the empty and malicious "frameup" they now showed themselves to be. Without warning, and doubtless in answer to some subtle sign from Abdul, the entire band of Bedouins precipitated itself upon me; and having produced heavy ropes, soon had me bound as securely as I was ever bound in the course of my life, either on the stage or off. I struggled at first, but soon saw that one man could make no headway against a band of over twenty sinewy barbarians. My hands were tied behind my back, my knees bent to their fullest extent, and my wrists and ankles stoutly linked together with unyielding cords. A stifling gag was forced into my mouth, and a blindfold fastened tightly over my eyes. Then, as the Arabs bore me aloft on their shoulders and began a jouncing descent of the pyramid, I heard the taunts of my late guide Abdul, who mocked and jeered delightedly in his hollow voice, and assured me that I was soon to have my "magic powers" put to a supreme test which would quickly remove any egotism I might have gained through triumphing over all the tests offered by America and Europe. Egypt, he reminded me, is very old; and full of inner mysteries and antique powers not even conceivable to the experts of today, whose devices had so uniformly failed to entrap me.

How far or in what direction I was carried, I cannot tell; for the circumstances were all against the formation of any accurate judgment. I know, however, that it could not have been a great distance; since my bearers at no point hastened beyond a walk, yet kept me aloft a surprisingly short time. It is this perplexing brevity which makes me feel almost like shuddering whenever I think of Gizeh and its plateau—for one is oppressed by hints of the closeness to every-day tourist routes of what existed then and must exist still.

The evil abnormality I speak of did not become manifest at first. Setting me down on a surface which I recognized as sand rather than rock, my captors passed a rope around my chest and dragged me a few feet to a ragged opening in the ground, into which they presently lowered me with much rough handling. For apparent eons I bumped against the stony irregular sides of a narrow hewn well which I took to be one of the numerous burial shafts of the plateau until the prodigious, almost incredible depth of it robbed me of all bases of conjecture.

The horror of the experience deepened with every dragging second. That any descent through the sheer solid rock could be so vast without reaching the core of the planet itself, or that any rope made by man could be so long as to dangle me in these unholy and seemingly fathomless profundities of nether earth, were beliefs of such grotesqueness that it was easier to doubt my agitated senses than to accept them. Even now I am uncertain, for I know how deceitful the sense of time becomes when one or more of the usual perceptions or conditions of life is removed or distorted. But I am quite sure that I preserved a logical consciousness that far; that at least I did not add any full-grown phantoms of imagination to a picture hideous enough in its reality, and explicable by a type of cerebral illusion vastly short of actual hallucination.

All this was not the cause of my first bit of fainting. The shocking ordeal was cumulative, and the beginning of the later terrors was a very perceptible increase in my rate of descent. They were paying out that infinitely long rope very swiftly now, and I scraped cruelly against the rough and constricted sides of the shaft as I shot madly downward. My clothing was in tatters, and I felt the trickle of blood all over, even above the mounting and excruciating pain. My nostrils, too, were assailed by a scarcely definable menace; a creeping odor of damp and staleness curiously unlike anything I had ever smelt before, and having faint overtones of spice and incense that lent an element of mockery.

Then the mental cataclysm came. It was horrible—hideous beyond all articulate description because it was all of the soul, with nothing of detail to describe. It was the ecstasy of nightmare and the summation of the fiendish. The suddenness of it was apocalyptic and daemoniac—one moment I was plunging agonizedly down that narrow well of million-toothed torture, yet the next moment I was soaring on bat-wings in the gulfs of hell; swinging free and swoopingly through illimitable miles of boundless, musty space; rising dizzily to measureless pinnacles of chilling ether, then diving gaspingly to sucking nadirs of ravenous, nauseous lower vacua. . . . Thank God for the mercy that shut out in oblivion those clawing Furies of consciousness which half-unhinged my faculties, and tore Harpy-like at my spirit! That one respite, short as it was, gave me the strength and sanity to endure those still greater sublimations of cosmic panic that lurked and gibbered on the road ahead.

PART II

IT was very gradually that I regained my senses after that eldritch flight through stygian space. The process was infinitely painful, and colored by fantastic dreams in which my bound and gagged condition found singular embodiment. The precise nature of these dreams was very clear while I was experiencing them, but became blurred in my recollection almost immediately afterward, and was soon reduced to the merest outline by the terrible events—real or imaginary—which followed. I dreamed that I was in the grasp of a great and horrible paw; a yellow, hairy, five-clawed paw which had reached out of the earth to crush and engulf me. And when I stopped to reflect what the paw was, it seemed to me that it was Egypt. In the dream I looked back at the events of the preceding weeks, and saw myself lured and enmeshed little by little, subtly and insidiously, by some hellish ghoul-spirit of the elder Nile sorcery; some spirit that was in Egypt before ever man was, and that will be when man is no more.

I saw the horror and unwholesome antiquity of Egypt, and the grisly alliance it has always had with the tombs and temples of the dead. I saw phantom processions of priests with the heads of bulls, falcons, cats, and ibises; phantom processions marching interminably through subterraneous labyrinths and avenues of titanic propylaea beside which a man is as a fly, and offering unnamable sacrifices to indescribable gods. Stone colossi marched in endless night and drove herds of grinning androsphinxes down to the shores of illimitable stagnant rivers of pitch. And behind it all I saw the ineffable malignity of primordial necromancy, black and amorphous, and fumbling greedily after me in the darkness to choke out the spirit that had dared to mock it by emulation. In my sleeping brain there took shape a melodrama of sinister hatred and pursuit, and I saw the black soul of Egypt singling me out and calling me in inaudible whispers; calling me and luring me, leading me on with the glitter and glamour of a Saracenic surface, but ever pulling me down to the age-mad catacombs and horrors of its dead and abysmal pharaonic heart.

Then the dream-faces took on human resemblances, and I saw my guide Abdul Reis in the robes of a king, with the sneer of the Sphinx on his features. And I knew that those features were the features of Khephren the Great, who raised the Second Pyramid, carved over the Sphinx's face in the likeness of his own, and built that titanic gateway temple whose myriad corridors the archaeologists think they have dug out of the cryptical sand and the uniformative rock. And I looked at the long, lean, rigid hand of Khephren; the long, lean, rigid hand as I had seen it on the diorite statue in the Cairo Museum—the statue they had found in the terrible gateway temple—and wondered that I had not shrieked when I saw it on Abdul Reis . . . . That hand! It was hideously cold, and it was crushing me; it was the cold and cramping of the sarcophagus . . . . the chill and constriction of unrememberable Egypt . . . It was nighted, necropolitan Egypt itself . . . . that yellow paw . . . . and they whisper such things of Khephren . . . .

But at this juncture I began to awake—or at least, to assume a condition less completely that of sleep than the one just preceding. I recalled the fight atop the pyramid, the treacherous Bedouins and their attack, my frightful descent by rope through endless rock depths, and my mad swinging and plunging in a chill void redolent of aromatic putrescence. I perceived that I now lay on a damp rock floor, and that my bonds were still biting into me with unloosened force. It was very cold, and I seemed to detect a faint current of noisome air sweeping across me. The cuts and bruises I had received from the jagged sides of the rock shaft were paining me woefully, their soreness enhanced to a stinging or burning acuteness by some pungent quality in the faint draught, and the mere act of rolling over was enough to set my whole frame throbbing with untold agony. As I turned I felt a tug from above, and concluded that the rope whereby I was lowered still reached to the surface. Whether or not the Arabs still held it, I had no idea; nor had I any idea how far within the earth I was. I knew that the darkness around me was wholly or nearly total, since no ray of moonlight penetrated my blindfold; but I did not trust my senses enough to accept as evidence of extreme depth the sensation of vast duration which had characterized my descent.

Knowing at least that I was in a space of considerable extent reached from the surface directly above by an opening in the rock, I doubtfully conjectured that my prison was perhaps the buried gateway chapel of old Khephren—the Temple of the Sphinx—perhaps some inner corridor which the guides had not shown me during my morning visit, and from which I might easily escape if I could find my way to the barred entrance. It would be a labyrinthine wandering, but no worse than others out of which I had in the past found my way. The first step was to get free of my bonds, gag, and blindfold; and this I knew would be no great task, since subtler experts than these Arabs had tried every known species of fetter upon me during my long and varied career as an exponent of escape, yet had never succeeded in defeating my methods.

Then it occurred to me that the Arabs might be ready to meet and attack me at the entrance upon any evidence of my probable escape from the binding cords, as would be furnished by any decided agitation of the rope which they probably held. This, of course, was taking for granted that my place of confinement was indeed Khephren's Temple of the Sphinx. The direct opening in the roof, wherever it might lurk, could not be beyond easy reach of the ordinary modern entrance near the Sphinx; if in truth it were any great distance at all on the surface, since the total area known to visitors is not at all enormous. I had not noticed any such opening during my daytime pilgrimage, but knew that these things are easily overlooked amidst the drifting sands. Thinking these matters over as I lay bent and bound on the rock floor, I nearly forgot the horrors of abysmal descent and cavernous swinging which had so lately reduced me to a coma. My present thought was only to outwit the Arabs, and I accordingly determined to work myself free as quickly as possible, avoiding any tug on the descending line which might betray an effective or even problematical attempt at freedom.

This, however, was more easily determined than effected. A few preliminary trials made it clear that little could be accomplished without considerable motion; and it did not surprise me when, after one especially energetic struggle, I began to feel the coils of falling rope as they piled up about me and upon me. Obviously, I thought, the Bedouins had felt my movements and released their end of the rope; hastening no doubt to the temple's true entrance to lie murderously in wait for me. The prospect was not pleasing—but I had faced worse in my time without flinching, and would not flinch now. At present I must first of all free myself of bonds, then trust to ingenuity to escape from the temple unharmed. It is curious how implicitly I had come to believe myself in the old temple of Khephren beside the Sphinx, only a short distance below the ground.

That belief was shattered, and every pristine apprehension of preternatural depth and daemoniac mystery revived, by a circumstance which grew in horror

and significance even as I formulated my philosophical plan. I have said that the falling rope was piling up about and upon me. Now I saw that it was *continuing to pile,* as no rope of normal length could possibly do. It gained in momentum and became an avalanche of hemp, accumulating mountainously on the floor, and half-burying me beneath its swiftly multiplying coils. Soon I was completely engulfed and gasping for breath as the increasing convolutions submerged and stifled me. My senses tottered again, and I vainly tried to fight off a menace desperate and ineluctable. It was not merely that I was tortured beyond human endurance—not merely that life and breath seemed to be crushed slowly out of me—it was the knowledge of *what those unnatural* lengths of rope implied, and the consciousness of what unknown and incalculable gulfs of inner earth must at this moment be surrounding me. My endless descent and swinging flight through goblin space, then, must have been real; and even now I must be lying helpless in some nameless cavern world toward the core of the planet. Such a sudden confirmation of ultimate horror was insupportable, and a second time I lapsed into merciful oblivion.

When I say oblivion, I do not imply that I was free from dreams. On the contrary, my absence from the conscious world was marked by visions of the most unutterable hideousness. God! . . . . If only I had not read so much Egyptology before coming to this land which is the fountain of all darkness and terror! This second spell of fainting filled my sleeping mind anew with shivering realization of the country and its archaic secrets, and through some damnable chance my dreams turned to the ancient notions of the dead and their sojournings in soul *and body* beyond those mysterious tombs which were more houses than graves. I recalled, in dream-shapes which it is well that I do not remember, the peculiar and elaborate construction of Egyptian sepulchres; and the exceedingly singular and terrific doctrines which determined this construction.

All these people thought of was death and the dead. Theey conceived of a literal resurrection of the body which made them mummify it with desperate care, and preserve all the vital organs in canopic jars near the corpse; whilst besides the body they believed in two other elements, the soul, which after its weighing and approval by Osiris dwelt in the land of the blest, and the obscure and portentous *ka* or life-principle which wandered about the upper and lower worlds in a horrible way, demanding occasional access to the preserved body, consuming the food offerings brought by priests and pious relatives to the mortuary chapel, and sometimes —as men whispered— taking its body or the wooden double always buried beside it and stalking noxiously abroad on errands peculiarly repellent.

For thousands of years those bodies rested gorgeously encased and staring glassily upward when not visited by the *ka,* awaiting the day when Osiris should restore both *ka* and soul, and lead forth the stiff legions of the dead from their sunken houses of sleep. It was to have been a glorious rebirth—but not all souls were approved, nor were all tombs inviolate, so that certain grotesque *mistakes* and fiendish *abnormalities* were to be looked for. Even today the Arabs murmur of unsanctified convocations and unwholesome worship in forgotten nether abysses, which only winged invisible *kas* and soulless mummies may visit and return unscathed.

Perhaps the most leeringly blood-congealing legends are those which relate to certain perverse products of decadent priestcraft—*composite mummies* made by the artificial union of human trunks and limbs with the heads of animals in imitation of the elder gods. At all stages of history the sacred animals were mummified, so that consecrated bulls, cats, ibises, crocodiles, and the like might return some day to greater glory. But only in the decadence did they mix the human and animal in the same mummy —only in the decadence, when they did not understand the rights and prerogatives of the *ka* and the soul. What happened to those composite mummies is not told of—at least publicly—and it is certain that no Egyptologist ever found one. The whispers of Arabs are very wild, and cannot be relied upon. They even hint that old Khephren—he of the Sphinx, the Second Pyramid, and the yawning gateway temple—lives far underground wedded to the ghoul-queen Nitocris and ruling over the mummies that are neither of man nor of beast.

It was of these—of Khephren and his consort and his strange armies of the hybrid dead—that I dreamed, and that is why I am glad the exact dream-shapes have faded from my memory. My most horrible vision was connected with an idle question I had asked myself the day before when looking at the great carven riddle of the desert and wondering with what unknown depths the temple so close to it might be secretly connected. That question, so innocent and whimsical then, assumed in my dream a meaning of frenetic and hysterical madness . . . . *what huge and loathsome abnormality was the Sphinx originally carven to represent?*

My second awakening—if awakening it was—is a memory of stark hideousness which nothing else in my life—save one thing which came after—can parallel; and that life has been full and adventurous beyond most men's. Remember that I had lost consciousness whilst buried beneath a cascade of falling rope whose immensity revealed the cataclysmic depth of my present position. Now, as perception returned, I felt the entire weight gone; and realized upon rolling over that although I was still tied, gagged and blindfolded, *some agency had removed completely the suffocating hempen landslide which had overwhelmed me.* The significance of this condition, of course, came to me only gradually; but even so I think it would have brought unconsciousness again had I not by this time reached such a state of emotional exhaustion that no new horror could make much difference. I was alone . . . . with *what?*

Before I could torture myself with any new reflection, or make any fresh effort to escape from my bonds, an additional circumstance became manifest. Pains not formerly felt were racking my arms and legs, and I seemed coated with a profusion of dried blood beyond anything my former cuts and abrasions could furnish. My chest, too, seemed pierced by an hundred wounds, as though some malign, titanic ibis had been pecking at it. Assuredly the agency which had removed the rope was a hostile one, and had begun to wreak terrible injuries upon me when somehow impelled to desist. Yet at the time my sensations were distinctly the reverse of what one might expect. Instead of sinking into a bottomless pit of despair, I was stirred to new courage and action; for now I felt that the evil forces were physical things which a fearless man might encounter on an even basis.

On the strength of this thought I tugged again at my bonds, and used all the art of a lifetime to free myself as I had so often done amidst the glare of lights and the applause of vast crowds. The familiar details of my escaping process commenced to engross me, and now that the long rope was gone I half regained my belief that the supreme horrors were hallucinations after all, and that there had never been any terrible shaft, measurless abyss, or interminable rope. Was I after all in the gateway temple of Khephren beside the Sphinx, and had the sneaking Arabs stolen in to torture me as I lay helpless there? At any rate, I must be free. Let me stand up unbound, ungagged, and with eyes

open to catch any glimmer of light which might come trickling from any source, and I could actually delight in the combat against evil and treacherous foes!

How long I took in shaking off my encumbrances I cannot tell. It must have been longer than in my exhibition performances, because I was wounded, exhausted, and enervated by the experiences I had passed through. When I was finally free, and taking deep breaths of a chill, damp, evilly spiced air all the more horrible when encountered without the screen of gag and blindfold edges, I found that I was too cramped and fatigued to move at once. There I lay, trying to stretch a frame bent and mangled, for an indefinite period, and straining my eyes to catch a glimpse of some ray of light which would give a hint as to my position.

By degrees my strength and flexibility returned, but my eyes beheld nothing. As I staggered to my feet I peered diligently in every direction, yet met only an ebony blackness as great as that I had known when blindfolded. I tried my legs, blood-encrusted beneath my shredded trousers, and found that I could walk; yet could not decide in what direction to go. Obviously I ought not to walk at random, and perhaps retreat directly from the entrance I sought; so I paused to note the direction of the cold, foetid, natron-scented air-current which I had never ceased to feel. Accepting the point of its source as the possible entrance to the abyss, I strove to keep track of this landmark and to walk consistently toward it.

I had had a match box with me, and even a small electric flashlight; but of course the pockets of my tossed and tattered clothing were long since emptied of all heavy articles. As I walked cautiously in the blackness, the draught grew stronger and more offensive, till at length I could regard it as nothing less than a tangible stream of detestable vapour pouring out of some aperture like the smoke of the genie from the fisherman's jar in the Eastern tale. The East. . . . Egypt. . . . truly, this dark cradle of civilization was ever the well-spring of horrors and marvels unspeakable! The more I reflected on the nature of this cavern wind, the greater my sense of disquiet became; for although despite its odor I had sought its source as at least an indirect clue to the outer world, I now saw plainly that this foul emanation could have no admixture or connection whatsoever with the clean air of the Libyan Desert, but must be essentially a thing vomited from sinister gulfs still lower down. I had, then, been walking in the wrong direction!

After a moment's reflection I decided not to retrace my steps. Away from the draught I would have no landmarks, for the roughly level rock floor was devoid of distinctive configurations. If, however, I followed up the strange current, I would undoubtedly arrive at an aperture of some sort, from whose gate I could perhaps work round the walls to the opposite side of this Cyclopean and otherwise unnavigable hall. That I might fail, I well realized. I saw that this was no part of Khephren's gateway temple which tourists know, and it struck me that this particular hall might be unknown even to archaeologists, and merely stumbled upon by the inquisitive and malignant Arabs who had imprisoned me. If so, was there any present gate of escape to the known parts or to the outer air?

What evidence, indeed, did I now possess that this was the gateway temple at all? For a moment all my wildest speculations rushed back upon me, and I thought of that vivid melange of impressions—descent, suspension in space, the rope, my wounds, and the dreams that were frankly dreams. Was this the end of life for me? Or indeed, would it be merciful if this moment *were* the end? I could answer none of my own questions, but merely kept on till Fate for a third time reduced me to oblivion. This time there were no dreams, for the suddenness of the incident shocked me out of all thought either conscious or subconscious. Tripping on an unexpected descending step at a point where the offensive draught became strong enough to offer an actual physical resistance, I was precipitated headlong down a black flight of huge stone stairs into a gulf of hideousness unrelieved.

That I ever breathed again is a tribute to the inherent vitality of the healthy human organism. Often I look back to that night and feel a touch of actual *humour* in those repeated lapses of consciousness; lapses whose succession reminded me at the time of nothing more than the crude cinema melodramas of that period. Of course, it is possible that the repeated lapses never occurred; and that all the features of that underground nightmare were merely the dreams of one long coma which began with the shock of my descent into that abyss and ended with the healing balm of the outer air and of the rising sun which found me stretched on the sands of Gizeh before the sardonic and dawn-flushed face of the Great Sphinx.

I prefer to believe this latter explanation as much as I can, hence was glad when the police told me that the barrier to Khephren's gateway temple had been found unfastened, and that a sizable rift to the surface did actually exist in one corner of the still buried part. I was glad, too, when the doctors pronounced my wounds only those to be expected from my seizure, blinding, lowering, struggling with bonds, falling some distance—perhaps into a depression in the temple's inner gallery—dragging myself to the outer barrier and escaping from it, and experiences like that . . . . a very soothing diagnosis. And yet I know that there must be more than appears on the surface. That extreme descent is too vivid a memory to be dismissed—and it is odd that no one has ever been able to find a man answering the description of my guide Abdul Reis el Drogman—the tomb-throated guide who looked and smiled like King Khephren.

I have digressed from my connected narrative—perhaps in the vain hope of evading the telling of that final incident; that incident which of all is most certainly an hallucination. But I promised to relate it, and do not break promises. When I recovered—or seemed to recover—my senses after that fall down the black stone stairs, I was quite as alone and in darkness as before. The windy stench, bad enough before, was now fiendish; yet I had acquired enough familiarity by this time to bear it stoically. Dazedly I began to crawl away from the place whence the putrid wind came, and with my bleeding hands felt the colossal blocks of a mighty pavement. Once my head struck against a hard object, and when I felt of it I learned that it was the base of a column—a column of unbelievable immensity—whose surface was covered with gigantic chiseled hieroglyphics very perceptible to my touch. Crawling on, I encountered other titan columns at incomprehensible distances apart; when suddenly my attention was captured by the realization of something which must have been impinging on my subconscious hearing long before the conscious sense was aware of it.

From some still lower chasm in earth's bowels were proceeding certain *sounds*, measured and definite, and like nothing I had ever heard before. That they were very ancient and distinctly ceremonial, I felt almost intuitively; and much reading in Egyptology led me to associate them with the flute, the sambuke, the sistrum, and the tympanum. In their rhythmic piping, droning, rattling, and beating, I felt an element of terror beyond all the known terrors of earth—a terror peculiarly dissociated from personal fear, and taking the form of a sort of objective pity for our planet, that it

should hold within its depths such horrors as must lie behind these aegipanic cacophonies. The sounds increased in volume, and I felt that they were approaching. Then—and may all the gods of all pantheons unite to keep the like from my ears again—I began to hear, faintly and afar off, *the morbid and millennial tramping of the marching things.*

It was hideous that footfalls *so dissimilar* should move in such perfect rhythm. The training of unhallowed thousands of years must lie behind that march of earth's inmost monstrosities . . . . padding, clicking, walking, stalking, rumbling, lumbering, crawling . . . and all to the abhorrent discords of those mocking instruments. And then . . . God keep the memory of those Arab legends out of my head! The mummies without souls . . . . the meeting place of the wandering *kas* . . . . the hordes of the devil-cursed pharaonic dead of forty centuries . . . . the *composite mummies* led through the uttermost onyx voids by King Khephren and his ghoul-queen Nitocris . . . .

The tramping drew nearer—Heaven save me from the sound of those feet and paws and hooves and pads and talons as it commenced to acquire detail! Down limitless reaches of sunless pavement a spark of light flickered in the malodorous wind, and I drew behind the enormous circumference of a Cyclopic column that I might escape for a while the horror that was stalking million-footed toward me through gigantic hypostyles of inhuman dread and phobic antiquity. The flickers increased, and the tramping and dissonant rhythm grew sickeningly loud. In the quivering orange light there stood faintly forth a scene of such stony awe that I gasped from a sheer wonder that conquered even fear and repulsion. Bases of columns whose middles were higher than human sight . . . . mere bases of things that must each dwarf the Eiffel Tower to insignificance . . . . hieroglyphics carved by unthinkable hands in caverns where daylight can be only a remote legend . . . .

I *would not* look at the marching things. That I desperately resolved as I heard their creaking joints and nitrous wheezing above the dead music and the dead tramping. It was merciful that they did not speak . . . . but God! *their crazy torches began to cast shadows on the surface of those stupendous columns.* Heaven take it away! *Hippopotami should not have human hands and carry torches* . . . . men should not *have the heads of crocodiles* . . . .

I tried to turn away, but the shadows and the sounds and the stench were everywhere. Then I remembered something I used to do in half-conscious nightmares as a boy, and began to repeat to myself, "this is a dream! This is a dream!" But it was of no use, and I could only shut my eyes and pray . . . . at least, that is what I think I did, for one is never sure in visions—and I know this can have been nothing more. I wondered whether I should ever reach the world again, and at times would furtively open my eyes to see if I could discern any feature of the place other than the wind of spiced putrefaction, the topless columns, and the thaumatropically grotesque shadows of abnormal horror. The sputtering glare of multiplying torches now shone, and unless this hellish place were wholly without walls, I could not fail to see some boundary or fixed landmark soon. But I had to shut my eyes again when I realized *how many* of the things were assembling—and when I glimpsed a certain object walking solemnly and steadily *without any body above the waist.*

A fiendish and ululant corpse-gurgle or death-rattle now split the very atmosphere—the charnel atmosphere poisonous with naphtha and bitumen blasts—in one concerted chorus from the ghoulish legion of hybrid blasphemies. My eyes, perversely shaken open, gazed for an instant upon a sight which no human creature could even imagine without panic fear and physical exhaustion. The things had filed ceremonially in one direction, the direction of the noisome wind, where the light of their torches showed their bended heads . . . . or the bended heads of such as had heads . . . They were worshiping before a great black foetor-belching aperture which reached up almost out of sight, and which I could see was flanked at right angles by two giant staircases whose ends were far away in shadow. One of these was indubitably the staircase I had fallen down.

The dimensions of the hole were fully in proportion with those of the columns—an ordinary house would have been lost in it, and any average public building could easily have been moved in and out. It was so vast a surface that only by moving the eye could one trace its boundaries . . . . so vast, so hideously black, and so aromatically stinking . . . Directly in front of this yawning Polyphemus-door the things were throwing objects—evidently sacrifices or religious offerings, to judge by their gestures. Khephren was their leader; sneering King Khephren *or the guide Abdul Reis,* crowned with a golden pshent and intoning endless formulae with the hollow voice of the dead. By his side knelt beautiful Queen Nitocris, whom I saw in profile for a moment, noting that the right half of her face was eaten away by rats or other ghouls. And I shut my eyes again when I saw *what* objects were being thrown as offerings to the foetid aperture or its possible local deity.

It occurred to me that judging from the elaborateness of this worship, the concealed deity must be one of considerable importance. Was it Osiris or Isis, Horus or Anubis, or some vast unknown God of the Dead still more central and supreme? There is a legend that terrible altars and colossi were reared to an Unknown One before ever the known gods were worshiped . . . .

And now, as I steeled myself to watch the rapt and sepulchral adorations of those nameless things, a thought of escape flashed upon me. The hall was dim, and the columns heavy with shadow. With every creature of that nightmare throng absorbed in shocking raptures, it might be barely possible for me to creep past to the far-away end of one of the staircases and ascend unseen; trusting to Fate and skill to deliver me from the upper reaches. Where I was, I neither knew nor seriously reflected upon—and for a moment it struck me as amusing to plan a serious escape from that which I knew to be a dream. Was I in some hidden and unsuspected lower realm of Khephren's gateway temple—that temple which generations have persistently called the Temple of the Sphinx? I could not conjecture, but I resolved to ascend to life and consciousness if wit and muscle could carry me.

Wriggling flat on my stomach, I began the anxious journey toward the foot of the left-hand staircase, which seemed the more accessible of the two. I cannot describe the incidents and sensations of that crawl, but they may be guessed when one reflects on *what I had to watch steadily in that malign, wind-blown torchlight* in order to avoid detection. The bottom of the staircase was, as I have said, far away in shadow; as it had to be to rise without a bend to the dizzy parapeted landing above the titanic aperture. This placed the last stages of my crawl at some distance from the noisome herd, though the spectacle chilled me even when quite remote at my right.

At length I succeeded in reaching the steps and began to climb; keeping close to the wall, on which I observed decorations of the most hideous sort, and relying for safety on the absorbed, ecstatic interest with which the monstrosities

watched the foul-breezed aperture and the impious objects of nourishment they had flung on the pavement before it. Though the staircase was huge and steep, fashioned of vast porphyry blocks as if for the feet of a giant, the ascent seemed virtually interminable. Dread of discovery and the pain which renewed exercise had brought to my wounds combined to make that upward crawl a thing of agonizing memory. I had intended, on reaching the landing, to climb immediately onward along whatever upper staircase might mount from there; stopping for no last look at the carrion abominations that pawed and genuflected some seventy or eighty feet below—yet a sudden repetition of that thunderous corpse-gurgle and death-rattle chorus, coming as I had nearly gained the top of the flight and showing by its ceremonial rhythm that it was not an alarm of my discovery, caused me to pause and peer cautiously over the parapet.

The monstrosities were hailing something which had poked itself out of the nauseous aperture to seize the hellish fare proffered it. It was something quite ponderous, even as seen from my height; something yellowish and hairy, and endowed with a sort of nervous motion. It was as large, perhaps, as a good-sized hippopotamus; but very curiously shaped. It seemed to have no neck, but five separate shaggy heads springing in a row from a roughly cylindrical trunk; the first very small, the second good-sized, the third and fourth equal and largest of all, and the fifth rather small, though not so small as the first. Out of these heads darted curious rigid tentacles which seized ravenously on the *excessively great* quantities of unmentionable food placed before the aperture. Once in a while the thing would leap up, and occasionally it would retreat into its den in a very odd manner. Its locomotion was so inexplicable that I stared in fascination, wishing it would emerge farther from the cavernous lair beneath me.

Then it *did* emerge . . . . it *did* emerge, and at the sight I turned and fled into the darkness up the higher staircase that rose behind me; fled unknowingly up incredible steps and ladders and inclined planes to which no human sight or logic guided me, and which I must ever relegate to the world of dreams for want of any confirmation. It must have been dream, or the dawn would never have found me breathing on the sands of Gizeh before the sardonic dawn-flushed face of the Great Sphinx.

The Great Sphinx! God!—that *idle* question I asked myself on that sunblest morning before . . . . *what huge and loathsome abnormality was the Sphinx originally carven to represent?* Accursed is the sight, be it in dream or not, that revealed to me the supreme horror—the Unknown God of the Dead, which licks its colossal chops in the unsuspected abyss, fed hideous morsels by soulless absurdities that should not exist! The five-headed monster that emerged . . . . the five-headed monster as large as a hippopotamus . . . . the five-headed monster—*and that of which it is the merest fore-paw* . . . .

But I survived, and I know it was only a dream.

THE END

Juvenile Criminal

"AMONG the children," says that active philanthropist, the Hon. Grey Bennet, in his evidence before the Police Committee, "whom I have seen in prison, a boy of the name of Leary was the most remarkable. He was about thirteen years of age, good looking, sharp, and intelligent, and possessing a manner which seemed to indicate a character very different from what he really possessed. When I saw him, he was under sentence of death for stealing a watch, chain and seals, from Mr. Princep's chambers in the Temple. He had been five years in the practice of delinquency, progressively from stealing an apple off a stall, to housebreaking and highway robbery. He belonged to the Moorfields' Catholic Chapel, and there became acquainted with one Ryan in that school, by whom he was instructed in the various arts and practices of delinquency. His first attempts were at tarts, apples, etc., next at loaves in bakers' baskets; then at parcels of halfpence on shop counters and money-tills in shops; then to breaking shop windows and drawing out valuable articles through the aperture, picking pockets, housebreaking, etc. Leary has often gone to school the next day with several pounds in his pockets, as his share of the produce of the previous day's robberies. He soon became captain of a gang, generally since known as Leary's gang, with five boys and sometimes more, furnished with pistols, taking a horse and cart with them; and, if they had an opportunity in their road, they cut off the trunks of gentlemen's carriages, when, after opening them and according to their contents, so they would be governed in prosecuting their further objects in that quarter; they would divide into parties of two, sometimes only one, and leaving one with the horse and cart, go to farm and other houses, stating their being on the way to see their families and begging for some bread and water; by such tales, united with their youth, they obtained relief and generally ended by robbing the house and premises. In one instance Leary was detected and taken, and committed to Maidstone gaol, but the prosecutor not appearing against him, he was discharged. In these excursions he has stayed out a week and upward, when his share has produced him from 50 pounds to 100 pounds. He has been concerned in various robberies in London and its vicinity, and has had property at one time amounting to 350 pounds; but when he had money, he either got robbed of it by elder thieves who knew he had so much money about him, or he lost it by gambling at flash houses, or spent it among loose characters of both sexes. After committing innumerable depredations, he was detected at Mr. Derrimore's at Kentish Town, stealing some plate from that gentleman's dining room; when several other similar robberies coming against him in that neighborhood he was, in compassion to his youth, placed in the Philanthropic Asylum; but being now charged with Mr. Princep's robbery, he was taken, tried, convicted, and sentenced to death, but was afterward respited, and returned to that Institution. He is little, and well-looking; and has robbed to the amount of 3,000 pounds during his five years' career. This surprising boy has since broke out and escaped from the Philanthropic, went to his old practices, and was again tried at the Old Bailey, and is transported for life."

A Tragic Storiette
By Vida Tyler Adams

"WHOSO DIGGETH A PIT—"

HE CAME from nowhere — just dropped in one morning at the cook house during breakfast, and asked for a job. Men were scarce during the first boom of the little oil town; that is, good men who knew oil, drilling and tool-sharpening, and the construction of derricks. For that reason, Matt Wilson judged by knowledge first, and character last.

So he hired Baden, who at once sat down with the men and ate ravenously, as if famished. He seemed a droll fellow, and the men enjoyed his company except for one fact. He never, at any time, looked any one of them straight and square in the eye. Through narrowed lids, his gaze shifted swiftly from a man's chin to his watch chain, or to the location of his pockets. It gave the men, at first, an uncanny feeling. But later, as they knew him better, their confidence returned. They jibed him about this habit finally. But he only laughed. So they labeled him "Shifty" Baden.

His past was a closed book. Once a man had questioned him too closely. His hands were long and slender, but they suddenly revealed hard, knotted muscles, which responded skillfully and brilliantly.

"Good fist work," commented Shorty Mason.

Shifty Baden accepted the tribute graciously, belittling his prowess modestly, and thus he won Shorty Mason's heart. Other bouts were staged with Shorty as manager, and money flowed into Shifty's pockets.

"Shifty's some little boxer," commented Shorty with pride.

"Yeah," agreed Indian. "Boss don't like it, though. Beats them to a mush. Can't work for a week."

"Forget him! Shifty says he's not paying us half what we're worth, anyhow. A man doesn't get even enough to pay his losses."

"Nope," Indian agreed, stirring the gravel with his foot. "Shifty says men're scarce. We should cash in on it, he says."

News of the unrest drifted in to Matt Wilson as he sat figuring ways and means with the Big Chief. The swinging screen door opened, letting in a dozen buzzing flies and Red Nelson.

"We want more pay, and time and half for Sundays," he said bluntly, eying Matt Wilson across the top of the battered office desk.

The heat was sweltering. The flies buzzed maddeningly.

"Gosh, Matt," the Big Chief exploded, "I thought you said you could handle the men. Better be 'tending your own end. I'll figure out mine alone." And he gathered up his figures and puffed out of the office.

Matt Wilson was bewildered.

"Why, Red," he said, "Have you forgotten? I told you fellows if you'd stand by me until we get agoing, I'd make it up to you. I meant what I said."

Red gazed at the dirt on the floor.

"That was six months ago," he said sheepishly. "We want more pay now."

Carefully, confidently, Matt explained to him various data regarding waiting contracts, the outlay of money before income could be expected, anxious investors, the inability to meet more wages now.

"This work is under the American plan, Red," he reminded him. "You agreed to that when you came to work. But I keep my promises. You will surely get time and a half as soon as we get on our feet. If you fellows strike now, you'll ruin us. There will be no work at all, then."

Red turned upon him an ugly and sullen look.

"You refuse then?"

"We haven't the money to swing it now, Red."

Without another word, Red turned and left the office, banging the screen door violently behind him.

Matt Wilson stared after him incredulously. Red Nelson, his best engine man. And his loyalty! Matt had never found occasion to question it.

Scarcely had the door closed than another shadow darkened the opening, a large abundant shadow, the jolly, and motherly person of Widow Gates. But today, no smile wreathed her usually tranquil visage. Rather, she trembled with wrath as she faced Matt Wilson.

"What sort of men be you hirin' now, Matt Wilson?" she exploded. "Of all the low-down ornery he-snakes that I ever saw, that there Shifty Baden beats them all. If I ever lay my hands on him, he'll cuss his birthday, and wish he were a worm to crawl underground where he belongs. What do you mean, wishin' him on us as is tryin' to build up a peaceful law-abidin' town with morals? Haven't we done well by you?" she demanded.

Matt Wilson gazed at her, his mind awhirl.

"Sit down, Mrs. Gates," he said.

She waved the proffered seat aside.

"Here I be standing this morning around the corner of the main bunk house, and there was Shifty talkin' to the Kid. She was deliverin' the washin', seeing as this is Friday.

" 'What's your name?' he asks.

" 'I'm the Kid,' she answers. 'I brung your washing.'

" 'Oho!' he says and sizes her up and down. 'You do the washing.'

" 'No, Mrs. Gates does,' she says, 'I deliver for her. Git them, too.' Then she shoves his parcel toward him.

"He takes it and says 'thanks,' and squeezes her hand right there before my very eyes, although he didn't see me.

"And the poor Kid, being, as you know, 'nobody home' "—she tapped her forehead significantly with her forefinger—"She grins and looks up at him stupidlike.

"And that vile snake runs his hand up and down her arm.

" 'How's that?' he asks.

"And she says, 'tickles,' and giggles at him.

"I couldn't stand it any longer so I came around the corner, and gave him such a look as would freeze him to an ice-cake, were he not so hard-boiled."

The widow panted for breath.

"And I sends the Kid home, but he's found out she lives with me, and he's come past so often it's made me nervous. And the Kid stays inside and sulks and

won't help me, 'cept I let her out so as she can talk to him."

Matt Wilson passed his hand over his forehead.

"Troubles never come singly," he cited. "That is not all, Mrs. Gates. The men have planned to strike. They want more money. Shifty must be back of it. They were satisfied until he came."

He thought a moment.

"Tell Chris Younger I want to see him," he commanded.

The widow waddled off excitedly.

Chris Younger came at once.

"I want you to go out in the field and take Baden's place and send him in to me at once." Matt Wilson's voice was hard.

Baden was sullen.

"I was just amusing the Kid," he offered. "As to the strike! I have nothing to do with it. If the men want to strike, I can't help it."

Matt Wilson was furious. It rather amused Baden.

"Got any proof about the strike?" Baden asked.

"No! you cur, but I have about the Kid, and that's enough. Get your time and get out!"

Baden's eyes narrowed. Slowly, he advanced toward Matt. He raised his right hand. It was knotted into the famous fighting fist.

But Matt was before him. Swiftly, he opened a drawer, and Baden was staring into a wicked little contrivance of steel and pearl.

He turned, and slunk out of the office like a beaten thing. But, once clear of the office, and out of sight, he turned, knotted up his fist and shook it maliciously toward the way he had come. He was in an ugly frame of mind. By nature underhanded, he went about getting his revenge entirely under cover. He found the Kid delivering clothes as usual. He had only a moment.

"Hello, Kid!" he greeted brightly.

The Kid snickered.

"Hello, yourself!" she responded.

"Say, like to go for an automobile ride this afternoon?" he asked.

"Sure." The Kid's vacant eyes took on a happy expression.

"All right. That's fine. Now listen, Kid. Today there's going to be a fire in one of those oil tanks out there." He waved toward the field of tanks beyond the towering derricks.

"When the fire gets going good, and everybody's gone out to where it is, I'll come to Mrs. Gates' place for you, and we'll go for a ride." Baden turned to go. "Now don't forget. If you are not at Mrs. Gates' front gate waiting for me, I won't take you. Remember, when you see the smoke, I'm coming for you."

A sharp whistle, like a little boy calling his dog, sounded from around the corner, and Baden struck off in the direction of the oil tanks.

Carefully, he skirted the derricks, with their choking engines and labyrinth of crawling cables. Down a gentle slope he crept to where the great storage tanks lay blinking in the hot sun. He chose the farthest tank. It lay glimmering at him in the sun, huge, black with weather stains, shimmering in the heat. Baden turned his eyes from the tank, and carefully scanned the field around him. Five other tanks made up the field, one fifty feet away, the others more distant. They reminded Baden of big stone animals, quiet, peaceful, waiting for his mischief. There was no life about them. Not a human being was in sight.

Deftly Baden took from his hip pocket a small cloth bag. From under the rubber band around it, he pulled out a yellow note book and tore from between its covers a white square of paper. Quickly, he filled the paper with the contents of the cloth bag. Next a match from his vest pocket. Another quick look around, and he bent his head forward, cupped his hands to his mouth and the cigarette was lighted.

With a lithe spring, he made the first rung of the iron ladder that clung to the side of the tank. He climbed rapidly. He pressed more firmly between his lips, the forbidden cigarette, and bent further over the trap door, the better to examine the contents of the tank, puffing rapidly the while that the cigarette might be well lighted before he dropped it in. He balanced his body easily on the top rung of the ladder. But it was slippery. His foot slid. He grasped the side of the tank wildly, lost his hold, and fell headlong into the reservoir.

THE oil was black, heavy and unrefined. It received his body without sound, and sucked it half way to the bottom. Oil filled his ears, his nose, oozed between his parted lips, covered his face, his clothes, and his shoes with slime.

Now Baden was young, and full of strength and the love of life. He fought his way valiantly to the top, with the long measured strokes of the practiced swimmer. He reached up a slimy hand to brush the oil from his eyes. Failing in this, he shook his head vigorously, and managed to open his eyes at last. All was black around him. Accustomed to the glare of the sunlight, his eyes could not penetrate the thick gloom. He turned his attention to his swimming.

"Stuff's easy to tread if only my shoes were off," he muttered.

Gradually, his vision became clearer, and he was able to discern the side of the tank. He swam toward it. The crude oil belabored the process, and he spent his strength freely, but at last he reached his goal. The side of the tank rose above him, smooth, slimy, bare of any handhold. He looked above. The trap door shone distant, a square of light in a vast expanse of gloom and shadow, unattainable, mocking.

"Help, help, help!" he cried. His voice choked with oil, echoed back feebly from the sides of the tank.

Then it was that he looked around him, and his oil-sodden eyes opened wide in horror.

"God help me now!" He could not speak. He could only breath the words.

A hundred globules of fire danced before him, bounding like rubber balls across the thick oil, sputtering in one pool, igniting others. No steady conflagration burned. Due to the quality of the impurities in the oil, the fire had not yet found constant feed. The top of the oil was like a huge frying pan in which dozens of fiery balls spat and sputtered at each other, to break out at last, scattering fire in all directions. They lighted up the interior of the tank in sulphuric colors, blue and green and royal purple, and the golden glow of lightning. The little white tube of tobacco floated innocently near Baden, its fire scattered, its mission fulfilled.

Baden gasped.

"Help!" he cried, frantically from between sticky, oil-smudged lips. The cry was smothered, gummed in his throat with oil. Baden made a superhuman effort and spat out the filth.

By this time his shoes were thoroughly saturated with oil, and weighed heavily, bearing him downward. Each movement of his legs cost him effort which he could ill spare. His clothes, drenched with oil, were oppressive, clinging to his body like slimy hands, eager, waiting to pull him downward. He struggled against their deadliness. A ball of burning oil burst near him, spraying his face with liquid fire. It seared into the flesh. Automatically, unthinking, he dived back into the oil.

He rose farther away from the fire. And now he was continually on the move, dodging, ducking, a weary chase, with the fire-balls constantly increasing in number. At length a huge ball

sprayed him from behind. It covered his matted hair with burning oil, and he sank below the surface, suffering excruciating agony.

He rose. But now the fire was all about him. The entire surface of the oil was covered with liquid fire. But the color was changed. From the oil, the fire rose dull red to blacken into suffocating smoke. It filled the tank with deadly fumes. It sucked up the oxygen like a fiery dragon.

Was no one coming to help? Baden gasped for breath, choked up with oil. Blinded in an agony of fire and smoke, he realized at last that his was not to be the victory. The flames settled once more upon him. There was no escaping them. He saw nothing, heard nothing, felt only the torture, the soul-racking pain.

His mind was strangely clear. Only a few more seconds to live. Dimly, he realized it. Hazily, he racked his wavering mind. The old half-forgotten training served him not falsely.

"L-lord—" his weary feet trod the oil slower and slower. "Lord have mercy"—the thick black smoke settled down upon his head. His nostrils distended, his hands flew upward. Slowly, his body sank—"on my soul."

The words were inaudible. The oil closed over him silently. A few slow, sluggish ripples marked his passage.

From the little white wicket gate that marked the entrance to Mrs. Gates' front yard, the Kid watched, impatiently, a huge black cloud of smoke rise from the distant trap door and spiral upward, and hang, heavy, black, and foreboding, above the big, oil tank.

Retaliation

SOME years ago, a commander of one of his majesty's ships of war, having been stationed for some time at Boston, received orders to cruise for the joint purpose of protecting our trade, and watching the motions of the enemy; and, after an absence of two or three months, unluckily returned on the sabbath-day.

The moment this gentleman's wife was informed that the ship was in harbor, she hastened down to the beach; when her husband, delighted with this proof of her affection, sprang from the boat, caught her in his arms, and, in the presence of many witnesses, repeatedly embraced, and pressed her to his heart.

This interesting scene of conjugal felicity was beheld by the superstitious inhabitants with horror and disgust, who conceived it an absolute profanation of all religious decorum, to have testified such emotions on a day dedicated to God. The next day he was summoned to appear before the magistrates, who severely reprimanded him for the indecency of the act; and, after having given him many pious admonitions, ordered a certain number of stripes to be inflicted upon his back.

As flagellation is a very common punishment in that country, the inflicting it was not considered as any particular mark of disgrace; and the captain was just as well received in every society after the degrading circumstance as before it had taken place. Notwithstanding this behavior on the part of the inhabitants, the son of Neptune's pride had received a wound not easily to be cured; and though he stifled the indignation that glowed within his bosom, he was determined to have ample revenge for the deed.

As soon as he had received orders to return to England, he waited upon the principal inhabitants at whose houses he had been entertained, and particularly upon the magistrates, who had taken so much pains to instruct him in the decorum that was due to the sabbath-day.

After expressing the sense he retained of their kindness and civility, he invited them to spend the last day on board his ship, that he might have an opportunity of testifying his gratitude for the numerous and friendly attentions he had received. The polite invitation was readily accepted; the day was spent with the utmost conviviality and glee; and the party resolved to stay till the very moment that the ship was getting under sail. At length it arrived; the anchor was apeak, the sails were unfurled, and the boat was in waiting to convey them from the ship, when the captain, after taking an affectionate leave of them, kindly followed them to the deck. There the boatswain stood ready to receive them, with the cat-of-nine-tails in his hand; and the crew were all placed in order for the purpose of witnessing the ludicrous scene. The captain again repeated his gratitude for their kindnesses, a just sense of which, he added, he should ever entertain, and only wished he had possessed the ability of making them a more ample return. "One point of civility, however," continued he, "I trust I can now recompense," and immediately reminded them of the disgraceful manner in which he had been used; and giving the signal to the crew, they were instantly pinioned, and the boatswain commanded to take his revenge; when, after each receiving three dozen of lashes, they were put into the boat amidst three hearty cheers. The ship instantly set sail for England, and was very soon out of sight.

Strange is the Love Tale of Nadine As Told in This Story, and Stranger Still is Its Unexpected Ending

DEEP CALLETH

By GORDON BURNS

DUANE BALLINGER sat on a fallen mahogany log, alternately shaking with chills and wiping the sweat from his face, as he watched his native boys finish the fag end of his planting. One more year, and he knew his plantations would be well started, and he could leave a half-caste overseer in charge and go home for a year. His thoughts always stopped right at this point—going home—and he got up from his log. He had promised himself a few hours of uninterrupted thought, as he had some problems to settle with himself before he went back to the home plantation, but this was not the time for it. There were a hundred things to do before night, and he was short-handed.

The night before, the Tauregs had come down out of the bush and had caught his boys at the worst hour possible, when they were tired out after a killing day under the tropic sun, and were nodding over their cook fires. Their short spears were always at their backs, of course, and they had made a game fight. Ballinger still thrilled when he thought of it. He had fought side by side with them, the shining black bodies glistening in the glow of the fires, the blood streaming from a slash in his leg. At the last a very madness of killing had seemed to possess him, and he had thrust and slashed like the black beasts themselves, he thought, rather shamefacedly.

They had finally driven the Tauregs back, but not without the loss of fourteen of his men.

"They are probably roasting before the Taureg cook fires right now," he said to himself grimly.

In the islands one does not like to think of the fate of prisoners. The Tauregs are head-hunters.

It would have been a much worse disaster if it had happened a few weeks earlier, but now the planting was almost finished, and only about half a hundred remained of the nuts, sprouted for the planting, and by night it would be finished.

He would leave Daku, his native overseer, in charge, while he went to meet Karl, who would be back from New Guinea by now with the new field hands. How lucky it was, he thought, that he had sent Karl for the men. Always they needed new hands, of course, as the blacks never do well at plantation labor, but they would need them worse than ever now.

It was after dark as he gave his last directions to Daku, and heavy tropic rain was falling in lines straight as lances, as he was rowed out to his little tramp steamer which was to take him to the home plantation, as he called his larger place over on Vatou.

At the turn of the tide the little steamer slipped over the reef and headed out to sea, leaving behind it the quick tropic storm and the wails of his black boys who, with the coming of night, had begun their weird songs of lamentation for their slain.

As they cleared the lagoon and began to feel the heave of the long Pacific rollers, although the lightning still played in the west, the moon rose, a magic green lantern, the shimmering silver pathway leading to the little steamer, a dark speck in this remote world of moving water.

Ballinger always liked to sit where he could see the forefoot of his little steamer throwing back a double line of gleaming phosphorus, and tonight as he sat on a coil of rope, feeling the surge of the waves that seemed to come from the far rim of the world, a fragment of verse that he had heard a girl in Noumea sing, drifted through his mind:

When the phosphor stars are thrown
from the shroud,
And the far heat lightning plays
On the rim of the west where the
cloud bank rests
On a darker bank of haze,
I know that the years of our life are
few,
And fain as a bird to flee,
That time is as brief as a drop of
dew,
But you are eternity.

He was like his mother in that, he thought, fragments of verse always coming unbidden, to remind him, as she had so often told him, that with all its striving, all its unsatisfied longings, life was beautiful.

What had gone wrong with his life, anyway? A year ago all this—the ocean, the night, the singing of the trade wind through the rigging—would have been a sheer delight, and now he felt only a vague, restless unhappiness. What was it all about? He put his head in his hands and deliberately went over the last year of his life, which by all rights should have been his happiest, as he had had Nadine.

He thought of his first meeting with her. He had been walking up from the wharf at Suva, late one night, just in from his plantation for supplies, and he had heard the sound of a harsh masculine voice, and of a woman sobbing. The sound had seemed to come from a narrow side street, and when he reached the spot a man's figure disappeared through a hedge, but a girlish form in white had been crumpled on the ground. As he raised her a pair of soft black eyes were lifted to his, and from that moment something in his steadfast English heart had gone out to her, never to return.

It had been a mad infatuation on his part from the first, and in a month they were man and wife. Even now, after they had been married a year, he could not think of her without a beating of blood in his temples. She was beautiful and winsome, with the soft sensuous beauty of the South, but there was an air of subtlety, almost of mystery about her, which he had tried in vain to penetrate. He realized suddenly how little, how very little he really knew her. She had no people, and she had been raised in the islands—that was about the sum of it. He had never even been able to get a very clear understanding of what had happened that time when he had found her, late at night, crying. She was given to long periods of stillness, not sullen or sulky, but rather as though she had withdrawn to some inner retreat

where he could not follow. He remembered with pain the many little deceits she had practiced upon him, nothing harmful or really wrong, but why should she hide anything from him, her husband? He had the normal Englishman's horror of intrigue or mystery.

There was that morning when Captain Stayne had come up on their veranda when they were at breakfast, and Ballinger had caught a look that passed between him and Nadine. He could have sworn that it spoke astonishment on his part and entreaty on hers, but it was gone almost as soon as seen. He had introduced him to Nadine, and she had been her usual sweet self in a moment, and afterward as he had walked down to the wharves with the Captain he had deliberately mentioned Nadine, but without eliciting a response of any kind from him. In fact the good old trader had seemed constrained, and had shaken hands with Ballinger at parting without meeting his eyes.

He had of course asked Nadine about it, but she had laughed and pulled his ears, and told him that he had imagined it, and he had said no more, knowing how useless it was to question her. There was no harm in her having known good old Stayne. Why hide the fact?

Then there was his partner Karl Newmann. He had picked Karl up one night out of O'Halloran's place, the lowest sailor dive in Suva, and had nursed him over a broken head. Afterwards, being badly in need of help, and Karl seemingly having sloughed his drinking, Ballinger had taken him on; he had rested more and more responsibility in him, and for this last year they had been, in a way, partners.

Karl was a blond giant, of undoubted Teutonic origin, and handsome in his own rather obvious physical way. He was absolutely without fear, and a hard, steady worker, and Ballinger had found him a wonderful help. But he couldn't like him, try as he would. There was a streak of cold-blooded brutality about him that was always cropping out in various ways, and which had kept Ballinger from ever having the feeling of friendship for him that would have been natural between two white men in a world of blacks.

He had had to stand constantly between Karl and the field hands. He thought of the time he had come upon him whipping one of the blacks with his rhinoceros-hide whip. The man was unconscious and covered with blood, and there was a look on Karl's face that had been the definite beginning of his dislike and aversion for his partner. And it had grown steadily worse.

From the very first moment of their acquaintance, however, Karl and Nadine had been congenial, and they spent much of their time together. There seemed to be a bond of friendship between them that, to Ballinger, knowing Karl as he did, seemed incomprehensible.

The little vessel struck a cross-sea, and a wave slapped across Ballinger's face. He got up rather wearily.

"I am just where I started in," he said to himself, "and I guess I am more or less of a fool. I have a lovely wife, a partner who is honest and hardworking, and two plantations that in a few years will make me a rich man, and I sit here glooming like a sick calf."

He shook himself and went into his little cabin.

The three of them sat that night in the twilight of a tropic day, the scent of hibiscus and crotons heavy in the air, and the great black-winged bats slanting here and there through the garden. The moon had not yet risen, and they were bathed in that magic blue light that lies between sun and moon, and which in these latitudes is as evanescent as a dream.

"There is my man Friday," said Nadine, idly, nodding towards the path down the clearing.

Ever since they had lived at the plantation they had seen with increasing frequency about the clearing one of the huge gray apes that live in the inner fastnesses of the islands but which are seldom seen at the plantations. He had evidently become more and more accustomed to their presence, and would stand at the edge of the clearing, his back to the jungle wall, staring unblinkingly at them. He must have stood nearly seven feet tall, with great, hanging arms.

There was something about him tremendously repellent to Ballinger. He often declared that he would shoot him, although not without a little secret feeling of blood-guiltiness, because in spite of his brutishness, the ape was, in many ways, so like a man. But Nadine declared she liked him, and was going to tame him for a servant. However, the ape had never allowed them to approach any nearer, and if they attempted it, he would slip into the bush. It was one of the mysteries of the country to Ballinger that into a wall of jungle absolutely impenetrable to a human, the ape would slip as soundlessly as if it had been water.

Tonight he stood as usual at the edge of the clearing, watching them.

"I'd give a good deal to know what goes on in his mind, if he has a mind," said Karl lazily. "I never saw an ape take so much interest in humans before."

"I'm going to dance for him," said Nadine suddenly, "and see what he thinks of that."

She took a step or two down the terrace and began the *upanahura*,—the "singing dance of love," as it is called by the Marquesans.

Words cannot portray this dance, filled as it is with all the magic of the tropics. She sang, as she danced, in her hushed, throaty voice, a little native refrain. All of the passion of love, all of the striving, the inarticulate longing, the elemental pain of life itself, were in the notes, and woven with it the wailing melancholy, which is in the very fiber of all native music.

The ape stood motionless, watching.

No one could listen to the haunting refrain and not feel its spell. Karl thought of the glistening, liquid folds of a python he had seen coiled under a causurina, one day; Duane, with a profound sadness, felt how a part of the very soil was Nadine; she seemed to breathe the spirit of the night itself. A wave of nostalgia swept over him, a longing for the cool green fields of his own English countryside. In one more year he would take her away from all this, from the islands, to England—home.

He reached a hand impulsively and drew her back. There was something in the whole scene, the impalpable blue twilight, the slender waving figure, the watching animal, that seemed to him suddenly grotesque, unreal.

"I don't want you to dance the native dances, Nadine," he said, shortly.

She rubbed her head against his arm like a kitten, and laughed up into his face.

"Let's walk a little," she said. "I feel restless."

"You and Karl walk," said Duane. "I have some figuring to do."

He walked toward the house, his spirit weighted by a nameless depression. He stopped a moment at the veranda rail, his eyes resting on a great red star, hanging low over the ocean.

"Antares," he said—

" 'Antares, heart of blood, how stir
thy wings
Above the sea's mysterious murmurings;
The road of death leads outward to
thy light—'

"What is the rest of that?" he murmured.

" 'The road of death leads outward
to thy light—' "

He stood for a moment with bent head.

"I need some quinine, I guess," he said sedately. "I'll go in and take it."

Nadine and Karl walked down the clearings and stopped under a bread-fruit tree, watching the silver lace of fireflies against the jungle wall.

"Oh, Karl!" she cried, pressing against his side, "If it weren't for you what would I do in this dead, dead place!"

His arm drew her roughly to him. The touch of brutality in Karl always thrilled her more than Duane's gentle chivalry had ever done.

He bent his head toward her upraised lips, when there was a swish of branches overhead, a green coconut struck with crushing force on his head, and he sank to the ground without a murmur.

Nadine stood petrified. She felt that she wanted to scream, to run, but her voice was gone, her limbs seemed paralyzed. Before she could speak or move a hairy arm swung her from the ground as lightly as a fallen leaf, and with one bound the great ape was across the path. For an instant he paused with working brows, the limp white figure slung across his arm; then the undergrowth parted, and soundlessly he was gone.

The green wall closed softly behind him.

Providential Warning at Sea

CAPTAIN THOMAS ROGERS, commander of a ship called the Society, was bound on a voyage from London to Virginia, about the year 1694.

The ship was hired in London, and being sent light, as they call it, to Virginia for a loading of tobacco, had not many goods in her, outward bound, perhaps about two or three hundred tons, which was not reckoned half her loading, the ship being very large, above five hundred tons burthen.

They had a pretty good passage, and the day before had an observation; whereupon the mates and proper officers brought their books and cast their reckonings with the captain, to see how near they were to the coast of America; they all agreed that they were at least about a hundred leagues distant from the Capes of Virginia. Upon these customary reckonings, and heaving the lead, and finding no ground at a hundred fathom, they set the watch, and the captain turned in.

The weather was good, a moderate gale of wind and blowing fair for the coast so that the ship might have run about twelve or fifteen leagues in the night after the captain was in his cabin. He fell asleep and slept very soundly for about three hours, when he awoke and lay till he heard his second mate turn out and relieve the watch; and then he called his chief mate as he was going off from the watch and asked him how all things fared, who answered that all was well and the gale freshened and they ran at a great rate; but it was a fair wind and a fine clear night so the captain went to sleep again. About an hour after he had been asleep, he dreamed that a man pulled him and awoke him and he did awake. He said the thing told him to get up and look aboard. But he laid still and composed himself to sleep, and was suddenly awoke again and thus several times; and though he knew not what was the reason, yet he found it was impossible for him to go to sleep, and still he thought he heard the vision say, "Turn out and look aboard." He lay in this uneasiness near two hours, but at last it increased so upon him that he could lie no longer, but got up, put on his watch-gown, and went out on the quarter-deck; there he found the second mate walking about and the boatswain upon the forecastle, the night fine and clear, a fair wind and all well as before.

The mate at first did not know him; but calling, "Who's there?" the captain answered, and the mate returned, "Who, the captain! what's the matter, Sir?" "I don't know," said the captain, "but I have been very uneasy these two hours and somebody or my fancy, bade me turn out and look aboard, though I know not what can be the meaning of it." "There can be nothing in it, but some dream," replied the mate. Said the captain, "How does the ship cape?" "South-west by South, fair for the coast and the wind, East by North," was the answer. "That's all very good," said the captain, and after some other usual questions, he turned about to go back to his cabin; when, as if it had been somebody that stood by him had spoke, it came into his mind like a voice, "Heave the lead, heave the lead." Upon this he turned again to his second mate: "Mate, when did you heave the lead? What water had you?" "About an hour ago, sixty fathom," said the mate. "Heave again," said the captain. "There's no manner of occasion, Sir," returned the mate, "but if you please it shall be done." "I don't know," said the captain, " 'tis needless, I think!" and so was going away again, but was, as it were, forced to turn back as before and said to the mate, "I know not what ails me, but I can't be easy; come, call a hand aft, and heave the lead." Accordingly a hand was called, and the lead being cast, they had ground at eleven fathom. This surprised them all, but much more than at the next cast it came up seven fathom. Upon this the captain bade put the helm a lee, and about ship, all hands being ordered to back the sails, as is usual in such case. The proper orders being obeyed, the ship stayed and presently came about and when she was about and before the sail filled, she had but four fathom and a half water under her stern; as soon as she filled and stood off, they had seven fathom again, and at the next cast eleven, and so on to twenty fathom; so he stood off to seaward all the rest of the watch, to get into deep water, till day-break; when, it being a clear morning, there were the Capes of Virginia and all the coast of America in fair view under their stern, and but a few leagues distant. Had they stood on but one cable's length further, as they were going, they had been bump ashore (as the sailors call it) and certainly lost their ship, if not their lives.

This Mystery Story Will Hold Your Interest to the End

The Malignant Entity

By OTIS ADELBERT KLINE

"I TELL you, Evans," said Dr. Dorp, banging his fist on the arm of his chair for emphasis, "the science of psychology is in much the same stage of development today as were the material sciences in the dark ages."

"But surely," I objected, "the two centuries of investigation just past have yielded some fruit. It cannot be that the eminent men who have devoted the greater part of their lives to this fascinating subject have labored in vain."

The doctor stroked his iron-gray Van Dyke meditatively.

"With a few—a very few exceptions, I'm afraid they have," he replied, "at least so far as their own deductions from observed phenomena are concerned."

"Take Sir Oliver Lodge, for example—" I began.

"The conclusions of Sir Oliver will serve as an excellent example for my analogy," said the doctor. "No doubt you are familiar with the results of his years of painstaking psychical research as expounded in his books."

"I believe he has become a convert to spiritism," I replied.

"With all due respect to Sir Oliver," said the doctor, "I should say that he has rather singled out such facts as suited his purpose and assembled them as evidence to support the spiritistic theory. It may seem paradoxical to add that I believe he has always been thoroughly conscientious in his investigations and sincere in his deductions."

"I'm afraid I do not quite follow you."

"There are times in the life of every man," continued the doctor, "when emotion dethrones reason. At such a crisis the most keen-witted of scientists may be blinded to truth by the overpowering influence of his own desires. Sir Oliver lost a beloved son. Only those who have suffered similar losses can appreciate the keen anguish that followed his bereavement, or sympathize with his intense longing to communicate with Raymond. Most men are creatures of their desires. They believe what they want to believe. Under the circumstances it was not difficult for a clever psychic to read the mind of the scientist and tell him the things he wanted to hear."

"But what of the many investigators who have not been similarly influenced?" I inquired. "Surely they must have found some basis—"

I was interrupted by the entrance of the doctor's housekeeper who announced—

"Beggin' your pardon, sir, a gentleman to see your, sir."

"Show him in," he said rather petulantly.

His frown of annoyance changed to a welcoming smile of recognition at sight of the tall, bulky individual who strode through the doorway.

"How are you, Doc," roared the big man as they shook hands cordially. "Haven't bothered you for a long time, have I? Got a case for you now that will make you put on your thinking cap all right."

"Sounds interesting," replied the doctor. "Let me present an old friend of mine, Mr. Evans, who writes a story every now and then when the spirit moves him. Mr. Evans, Chief McGraw of the detective bureau. We were just discussing our mutual hobby, psychic phenomena, when you came in," he continued after we had acknowledged the introduction.

"No doubt Chief McGraw's communication is of a confidential nature—" I began, with the purpose of taking leave of my host.

"Nothing secret about it so far as Dr. Dorp and his friends are concerned," interrupted the chief. "It may be that if you are a psychologist you can offer some solution of the mystery. Of course, I don't exactly know whether it's a case for a psychologist or not. Damned curious thing, and ghastly, too."

"Stay and listen if you are interested," said the doctor.

"If it has any smattering of psychology or the occult, you know my failing," I responded.

"Can't say as to that," said the chief. "It's queer enough, though—and horrible. You gentlemen have heard of Professor Townsend, I presume."

"You mean Albert Townsend, the chemist and inventor?" asked the doctor. "Assuredly. Who hasn't heard of him and his queer theories about creating life from inert matter? What has he done now?"

"I don't know whether it's something he did or something that was done to him, but anyway he's dead."

"Murdered?"

"That's the point I want you to help me clear up. I don't know. His daughter 'phoned the office this morning and asked for me. When I got on the wire I could hardly understand her, she was so hysterical. Sobbed out something about her father being gone and a human skeleton lying on the floor of his laboratory. I jumped in the car and took Hirsch, the finger print expert out there with me. We found the frightened girl weeping in the arms of a motherly neighbor, who informed us that the laboratory was on the second floor.

"The whitened skeleton of Professor Townsend, fully clothed in garments that hung like rags on a scarecrow, lay on the floor of the laboratory."

"You made sure, of course, that it really was the skeleton of the professor."

"Beyond the least shadow of doubt. In the first place it was clothed in the professor's garments. His watch with his name in the back was ticking in the vest pocket. His monogrammed ring, a present from his daughter, circled a bony finger. On the bones of the right forearm were the marks of a fracture that had healed and the skull was slightly indented above the right temple. These marks resulted from an automobile accident in which the professor was injured two years ago. To make assurance doubly sure, we called in his dentist who readily identified his own work on the teeth."

"When was the professor last seen alive?"

"That is the feature that makes the affair so uncanny. He was alive, and apparently normal, mentally and physically, at dinner last evening."

"Most amazing!" exclaimed Dr. Dorp. "Suppose we go out—"

"Just what I was going to suggest," replied the chief. "My car is standing outside. Would you care to accompany us, Mr. Evans?"

"He would perish from curiosity if he couldn't see the thing through now," said the doctor when I hesitated. "Come along with us, old man. If two minds are better than one, then surely three minds are superior to two."

We piled in the chief's roomy roadster and were soon speeding toward the house of mystery.

II

PRESENTLY the car stopped before a two story brick house. Its upper windows, with shades half drawn, appeared to stare down at us with a look of sly cunning as if endeavoring to conceal some fearful secret.

A short, chunky individual, smooth-faced and with a decidedly florid complexion, met us at the door. Chief McGraw introduced him as Hirsch, the finger print expert.

"All alone, Hirsch?" asked the chief, looking about as we entered the spacious living room.

"Might as well be," replied Hirsch. "Miss Townsend is in her room with a neighbor. The cook and housemaid are out in the kitchen, scared green."

"Coroner been here?"

"No. He called me up about twenty minutes ago and said he had an inquest to attend to on the south side. Told me he didn't know how soon he could get here, but it would be several hours, at least."

"How about the prints?"

"All the finger prints in the laboratory seem to have been made by the same person, evidently the professor."

"Hum. Better 'phone headquarters right away and have them send Rooney out. He might come in handy to guard the death room in case the coroner is late."

"All right sir. I'll call up right away."

"Now gentlemen," said the chief, turning to the doctor and me, "let us go upstairs."

We followed him up the thickly carpeted stairway and along a broad corridor at the end of which he opened a door.

I started involuntarily at sight of the grinning, ghastly thing that lay on the floor. Not so Dr. Dorp. He knelt beside it and examined it minutely, his keen gray eyes alert for every detail. He even touched his fingers to the white forehead and prodded the shadowy depths of the empty eye sockets.

At length he rose and washed his hands at the porcelain lavatory.

"It seems incredible," he said, "that this man could have been alive yesterday."

"Just what I was thinking," responded the chief. "Those bones could not have been drier or whiter if they had bleached in the sunlight for the last ten years."

The doctor now turned his attention to the contents of the laboratory. He examined the collection of retorts, test tubes, breakers, jars, dishes and other paraphernalia spread on a porcelain-topped table set against the wall and reaching half the length of the room. The walls were shelved clear to the ceiling, and every shelf was crowded to its utmost capacity with bottles, jars and cans containing a multitude of chemicals. To these he gave but scant attention.

In the center of the immaculate white tile floor stood an open, glass-lined vat. From its height and diameter I estimated its capacity at about sixty gallons. This vat was more than a third full of a

colorless, viscous liquid that gave off a queer, musty odor.

"What do you suppose that stuff is?" I asked Dr. Dorp.

"Looks like a heavy albuminous or gelatinous solution," he said. "Possibly it is some special compound the professor employed in his experiments. Mediums of this nature are often used in the cultivation of colonies of bacteria and it is possible that he intended to use it as a carrier and food for the organisms it was his ambition to create synthetically."

"Any idea what caused the death of the professor?" asked the chief.

"I have a theory," replied Dr. Dorp, "but it seems so illogical, so wildly impossible, so—er, contrary to the teachings of science that I prefer to keep it to myself for the present, at least."

A heavy tread sounded in the hallway and a moment later a blue-uniformed officer entered.

"Hello, Rooney," greeted Chief McGraw. "I want you to see that no one disturbs this room or its contents until the coroner arrives. We are going downstairs now. Keep a weather eye on things and I'll send a man to relieve you soon. If either of these gentlemen want to come in at any time you may admit them."

"Yis, sor. I'll remember them."

We trooped downstairs. Two women were seated in the living room. Chief McGraw presented us to the younger, who proved to be the professor's daughter, Dorothy Townsend. She was a slender girl about twenty years of age with pale, regular features and a wealth of gold-brown hair. Her large, expressive eyes were red with recent weeping and her lips quivered slightly as she bowed to us in turn and introduced us to the stout, middle-aged neighbor, Mrs. Harms, who had been endeavoring to comfort her.

"Hirsch and I are going to run down to headquarters for a couple of hours," said the chief. "Would you prefer to come with us or stay here and look around?"

"I think we had better look around a bit if you don't mind," replied the doctor.

"All right. I'm going to send a man to relieve Rooney at six. Will be along myself a little later. If you discover anything new call me up."

When the two men were gone the doctor bowed before Miss Townsend.

"May I have a few words with you in private?" he asked.

"Certainly," she replied, rising, "in Father's study if you wish."

They entered the study, which was directly off the living room, and closed the door. They must have been gone about a half hour, but it seemed like two hours to me as, fidgeting inwardly, I listened to Mrs. Harms' family history, her account of the death of her beloved husband, and minute descriptions of six operations she had undergone, each time, to use her own expression, "standing at the entrance of death's door." She assured me, also, that she knew what it was to have death in the home. The Grim Reaper had visited her family a score of times, she averred, and only three weeks before, one of her roomers had been found dead in bed.

She prattled on with scarce a pause until the door of the study opened. I was glad when she went upstairs with Miss Townsend and left Dr. Dorp and me together.

"Come into the study," he said. "I have learned some interesting things, and it is possible that more await us in here."

Professor Townsend's study was neither large nor pretentious. It was obviously the retreat of a profound student as attested by the book-lined walls, many of the volumes of which were worn with much handling. The furniture consisted of a large, roll-top desk, a smaller typewriter desk on which stood a hooded machine, a filing cabinet, two office chairs and three comfortable overstuffed chairs, one beside the window, the other two placed conveniently under wall lights for reading.

A thick pile of typewritten manuscripts lay on the roll-top desk. The doctor divided them, handing me half and settling himself comfortably in one of the overstuffed chairs with the other half.

"Miss Townsend kindly brought these out of the files for me," explained the doctor. "I think it possible that they may shed some light on the mysterious cause of the death of their author. We can save time by dividing the work."

"I believe I can conduct a more intelligent search if you will give me some idea of what I am to look for," I said.

"Quite so," he agreed. "I had forgotten for the moment that you were not familiar with the details of my interview with Miss Townsend. Let me review it briefly.

"She finished school nearly a year ago, and since that time has been acting as her father's secretary, typing his manuscripts and attending to much of his voluminous correspondence.

"He has been working day and night in his effort to prove his theory that a living organism can be created from inorganic matter. During their months of close association she found him extremely irritable until one morning about three weeks ago. It appeared that his very nature had changed over night and she assumed that he had made some important discovery. She remembers the exact date owing to the fact that Mrs. Harms' roomer was found dead in bed on the night of the supposed discovery. This roomer, who was living under an alias, was found to be a notorious character known as Immune Benny, and is alleged to have committed numerous crimes, among which were several revolting murders, without ever having been convicted.

"After that night the professor's jubilant attitude kept up until his death. He paid no attention to his correspondence or manuscripts and spent the greater part of his time in his laboratory, presumably experimenting with numerous live animals which he had delivered each day. His first experiments, she stated, were with mice, rats and guinea pigs. He next used cats, rabbits and small dogs, then larger dogs until, on the day before his death he had two huge mastiffs brought to the house and took them into the laboratory. None of the animals taken behind that door ever reappeared, and she quite naturally assumed that they had been the subjects of vivisection. My theory, however, is that he—"

The doctor was interrupted by a loud rap at the study door. He rose and opened it, revealing a sturdy uniformed policeman. A frightened housemaid peered around his huge bulk. The man seemed greatly perturbed. His voice shook as he asked—

"Where's Rooney?"

"He's on guard in the laboratory," replied the doctor. "Are you the man sent to relieve him?"

"I'm Officer Burke. The maid, here, showed me to the laboratory, but Rooney ain't there. It's a horrible place. Don't blame him for leavin'."

"Yes. That skeleton on the floor isn't exactly pretty."

"*That* skeleton? You mean *them* skeletons. There was two of them, *and one was dressed in a cop's uniform!*"

With an exclamation of surprise and horror, the doctor threw down the manuscripts he was holding and rushed for the stairway. I followed breathlessly.

III

WHAT we saw in that awful room of death confirmed our wildest fears. A skeleton, with the bones whitened like those of the professor, lay on the floor facing the doorway. One bony arm was stretched across the threshold as if its owner had been attempting to drag himself from the room when struck down. A blue uniform bagged loosely over the bones, and on the feet were the heavy, hobnailed, square-toed shoes I had noticed on Rooney's feet some time before.

The doctor squinted at the star on the breast of the recumbent figure. Then he turned to Officer Burke who had come up behind us.

"What was Rooney's number?" he asked.

"942."

"Then this is Rooney's uniform and it probably is his skeleton. Call up the chief and tell him what happened. This is horrible—diabolical!"

"Your theory," I said, "does this shed any new light on it?"

"On the contrary," he replied, "it makes the case more baffling than ever. It seems incredible that such things can really happen. I tell you, Evans, there is some mysterious force at work here—something new and unheard of in the annals of scientific research. It is my opinion that the late Professor Townsend chanced upon some force hitherto unknown to scientists and played with it like a little child with fire until it suddenly destroyed him. The death of Officer Rooney is ample proof that this terrible force, whatever it may be, survived him.

"Now let us conjecture regarding the nature of this thing that has taken the lives of two human beings. We know that the professor's chief ambition was to create life from inert matter. All of his experiments in the laboratory were made with this object in view. All his printed works show plainly his firm belief that the thing could be accomplished, some of them going so far as to point out the processes by which he believed protoplasm, the primitive basic life substance, might be analyzed. As protoplasm is a compound of almost unlimited complexity in its physical and chemical constitution, our most skilled chemists have been unable to unravel its secrets. In fact, the further a chemist gets in his attempts at analysis the more baffling and complex he finds it to be. Being a compound composed of complex substances which are in turn composed of others still more complex, and so on, ad infinitum, its secrets are fully as inscrutable as those of the starry universe.

"The professor's first step, therefore, in this seemingly impossible undertaking, would be to analyze protoplasm. Assuming that he succeeded in reducing it to its basic elements his next problem would be to take similar elements and, through a process even more complex than the previous one, assemble and reassemble them until they were capable of sustaining life.

"Let us suppose that he did these things. Let us assume that he has succeeded in creating protoplasm. What next? We will say that he has taken some primitive form of life for a pattern, a moneron, perhaps, the most simple type of animal, consisting of a single cell of protoplasm. There still exists a difference between the moneron and the synthetically created cell. Chemically and physically they are the same, but the moneron is *alive*.

"What is life? Broadly defined as we recognize it on this earth, it is a temporary union of mind and matter. There may be, and probably is another kind of life which is simply mind without matter, but we of the material world know it not. To us, mind without matter or matter without mind are equally dead. The moneron has a mind—a soul—a something that makes it a living individual. Call it what you will. The professor's cell of man-made protoplasm has not. Can you conceive of any possible way in which he could, having reached this stage, create an individual mind or soul, an essence of life that, once united with his cell of protoplasm would form an entity?"

"It seems impossible," I admitted.

"So it seems," he replied, "yet it is only on such an hypothesis that I can account for the mysterious deaths of the professor and Officer Rooney."

"But I don't see how a moneron or a creature remotely resembling one could kill and completely devour a man in less than two hours," I objected.

"Nor I," agreed the doctor. "In fact I am of the opinion that, if the professor did succeed in creating life, the result was unlike any creature large or small, now inhabiting the earth—a hideous monster, perhaps, with undreamed of powers and possibilities—an alien organism among billions of other organisms, hating them all because it has nothing in common with them—a malignant entity governed solely by the primitive desire for food and growth with only hatred of and envy for the more fortunate *natural* creatures around it."

"If the professor did succeed in creating or discovering such a creature," I said, "it is evidently in this house at this very moment. Unless it has the faculty of making itself invisible a thorough search should reveal its whereabouts, for having consumed two men it must be a monster of no mean proportions."

"That is true," replied the doctor, "however, we have another hypothesis that is equally worthy of our consideration if we accept the premise that the professor created a living creature. Judging from his writings he spent a considerable portion of his time studying and experimenting in microbiology. Suppose he succeeded in creating a microscopic organism, and that organism had the power to reproduce its kind. If it reproduced by fission, that is, by simply dividing itself after it had attained a certain size, the only check to its increase would be death or lack of food. The more food it could obtain that much more rapidly would it and its descendants multiply. Countless billions of such creatures might occupy this room and yet be invisible without the aid of a compound microscope. There is ample room for a swarm of such creatures numerous enough to devour a man to float in the air above our heads without revealing its presence."

The words of the doctor affected me strangely. Involuntarily I looked upward, half expecting a swarm of man-eating microbes to descend and devour me. For a moment I was seized with a feeling of panic so strong I could scarcely restrain myself from leaping for the door. The fact that the sun had just set and dusky shadows were thickening in the room augmented the illusion. I crossed the floor nervously and pressed the switch beside the door. Instantly the place was flooded with blue-white light from a cluster of powerful globes depending from the middle of the ceiling.

As I was recrossing the room my eyes fell on the contents of the glass-lined tank. I stared unbelievingly for a moment, then called Dr. Dorp.

"What is it, Evans?" he asked.

"The liquid in this tank," I replied. "It has changed color. Something has turned it pink."

"The effect of the artificial light, no doubt," he said, coming up beside me. Then I saw the expression of doubt on his face change to one of surprise and wonder.

"You are right," he exclaimed. "It has not only changed color but a still more remarkable transformation has taken place. When we noticed it this afternoon, the tank was a third full of the colorless liquid. *This pink fluid reaches half way to the top!*"

IV

THE tread of many feet sounded in the hall.

Chief McGraw paused in the doorway, staring down at the blue-clad skeleton on the floor, a look of horror on his face. Behind him were four policemen in uniform.

"Is—is that the skeleton of poor old Rooney?" he asked.

"I'm afraid it is," replied Dr. Dorp.

The chief knelt and examined the star on the bagging blue coat.

"It's hellish, positively hellish," he said, rising. "Do you know what killed him?"

"We are working on a theory—" began the doctor, but was interrupted by the chief.

"Theories be damned!" he snapped. "Work on your theories if you want to. This thing has gone too far. I'm going to get some *facts.*" He swung on the four men behind him. "Search the house," he said. "Look sharp for anything of a suspicious nature. An infernal machine, perhaps, or a blood sucking animal. There is a man-killer of some kind, human or otherwise, hidden in this house, and it's our business to find it."

When the men had departed he stepped over Rooney's skeleton.

"I'll search this room myself," he said.

He did, with professional thoroughness, looking for hidden panels and sounding the walls, both in the open areas and behind the shelves, for hollow spaces. Then he began opening the drawers in a tall cabinet that stood in one corner, disclosing surgical and dissecting instruments of various kinds, an indexed set of microscope slides with some extra lenses, platinum dishes, porcelain drying pans, crucibles, glass rods and tubing, pipettes, rubber tubing and stoppers, rubber gloves and aprons, and other miscellaneous laboratory paraphernalia.

The bottom drawer of the cabinet was quite large and deep. The chief cried out excitedly when he saw its contents.

"Good Lord! Look at that!" he exclaimed.

It was filled to the top with dry, white bones.

"Nothing but the bones of small animals," said Dr. Dorp, picking up a skull. "This, for instance, is the skull of a dog." Then, taking up another: "Here is the skull of a rabbit. Notice the characteristic chisel-shaped teeth. This one beside it once supported the bewhiskered countenance of a common house cat."

"What do you suppose he was doing with them?" asked the chief.

"It is my belief that they were brought here to be killed and devoured by the same thing that killed the professor and Rooney."

"And that thing is—"

"At present, merely a shadowy theory, although it most certainly has an existence. There is a power in this house that is a menace to everyone under this roof—a malignant entity that destroys human beings in some mysterious manner unparalleled in the annals of science or human experience. This much we know, reasoning from effects. Reasoning from possible causes we are aware that the hobby of Professor Townsend was the endeavor to create a living thing from inorganic matter, and putting the two together it seems to me that the logical hypothesis would be that he either succeeded in creating a monster of a sort unknown to biologists, or discovered and developed unheard of powers and habits in a creature already known."

"If there's such a thing in this house, believe me I'm going to find it," said the chief, stamping out of the room.

"Now that we have a few moments to ourselves," said Dr. Dorp when McGraw had departed, "let us conduct a search, or rather an inquiry on our own account. I perceive that we have a very excellent compound microscope at our disposal and am curious to examine the liquid which has so mysteriously risen and changed color in the tank."

He took a blank slide from the cabinet drawer and a small glass rod from the table. As he was about to dip the rod in the liquid he uttered a low exclamation of surprise.

"What's up now?" I asked.

"This amazing liquid has again become transparent," he replied. "The red tint is gone."

He plunged the tip of the rod into the viscous liquid, twisted it slightly and withdrew it. Although the liquid seemed quite heavy it slipped from the end of the rod much after the manner of the white of an egg. After considerable juggling he succeeded in obtaining a small amount which he smeared on the slide. He then placed the slide in position and adjusted the microscope with a practiced hand.

"Well," I asked, after he had peered into the eyepiece for a full ten minutes, "what is the stuff, anyway?"

"Here, look for yourself," he replied.

What I saw in the field of the microscope appeared to be a mesh work or foam work of exceedingly fine bubbles or perhaps globules. Granules of different sizes and shapes seemed imbedded in these globules and the whole was dotted at intervals with small white objects. While I watched several of these white objects seemed to dissolve and disappear. All of them apparently were endowed with life, for I noticed that they expanded or contracted spasmodically and seemed endeavoring to push their way through the surrounding bubbles.

"Seems to be a sort of foam," I said, "with something alive floating in it."

"The foam, as you call it, bears a singular resemblance to the basic life principle, protoplasm, when seen under the microscope," replied the doctor.

"But those white things—" I began.

"The white things," he went on, "are the living remnants of a complex organism that has been destroyed. They are waging an unequal and hopeless battle against assimilation by the globules that surround them. These faithful guardians of the organism when alive still fight, and will continue to fight the enemy until, figuratively speaking, the last man falls."

"But what are they?" I demanded.

"Unless I am very much mistaken," he replied, "they are—"

His answer was cut short by the appearance of Chief McGraw.

"Coroner and jury are downstairs," he said tersely. "I suppose they'll want your testimony. I'll leave a couple of men on guard here if you want to come down."

"Let us go down to the study and complete our perusal of the professor's manuscripts while the jury is in session," said the doctor. "We can thus save considerable time and will be on hand when they are ready to question us."

We met Coroner Haynes and his jurors at the foot of the stairs. They were about to go up for an inspection of the laboratory and its gruesome contents.

Dr. Dorp switched on one of the reading lamps and closed the door. Then he established himself in a comfortable chair with a pile of manuscripts and I followed his example. We found essays and articles on almost every subject pertaining to the transmission or generation of life. There were papers on anatomy, bacteriology, cell-structure, microbiology and embryology. There were treatises on evolution, spontaneous generation, and the structures and

habits of micro-organisms. A forceful and extremely impressive essay set forth the astounding theory that all life was merely a form of force generated from matter. The reasoning was, of course, purely analogical. The professor's contention, stated briefly, was that just as electricity, a force that is invisible and indefinable, is generated by the friction of particles of certain kinds of matter, so life is generated and springs into being when certain other types of matter come together in the right proportions and combinations.

"What is your opinion of this theory?" I asked Dr. Dorp.

"It is most cleverly put, but false because based on the false premise of the materialists that there are but two things in the universe, matter and force. They do not recognize the power that controls the force which moves the matter toward a fixed objective. That power is mind. Thus, to them, all life and all mind are merely forms of force generated originally from inert matter."

"If the professor succeeded in creating a living thing from inert matter," I said, "it seems to me that he has demonstrated his proposition."

"Why?"

"Because he was experimenting with dead matter and not with mind or living creatures. There would be no mind or soul involved to inherit its being from a parent mind or soul. A new life entity would be generated, as it were, from matter which formerly contained no life."

"I think," said the doctor quietly, "you would have stated the proposition more accurately had you said that a life entity—a mind without a body—had been induced to enter the body synthetically created."

Our discourse was interrupted by Chief McGraw, who informed us that we were wanted by the coroner.

V

DR. DORP did the talking before the coroner's jury. All the way through his testimony was negative. When asked if he had any idea what killed the professor and the policeman he replied that he had several ideas, but none of them would be worth bringing before the jury without more facts to substantiate them. I could see that his purpose was to get the inquest over with as soon as possible so we might continue the investigation.

After due deliberation a verdict of "Death from cause or causes unknown," was brought in and the coroner departed with his men.

"Now that the inquest is over, what do you suggest?" McGraw asked the doctor.

"My suggestion is that we immediately destroy the liquid in the glass-lined tank in the laboratory."

"Why?"

"Because I am convinced that it is at least one of the causes of the deaths that have taken place in this house."

"I suppose you have a good reason for your assumption."

"An excellent one, I believe. While you and your men were searching the house, Mr. Evans and I conducted a little investigation of our own. We put some of the liquid under the compound microscope and as we both saw the same things I am convinced that my eyes did not deceive me. Tell the chief what you saw, Evans."

I described the foam work, the granules and the white objects which appeared to be alive and struggling to escape.

"All Greek to me," said the chief. "What was it?"

"The foam work with its accompanying granules closely resembled protoplasm, the basic life substance."

"And the white things—"

"Were white blood corpuscles from the veins of a human being. They were the strongest of the human body cells to resist assimilation and consequently the last to succumb. The red corpuscles turned the liquid pink for a while but they had disappeared before we made our microscopic examination."

"Good Lord, why didn't you tell me this before?" demanded the chief. "Let's go up and destroy the stuff now. Those two men up there might be killed any minute."

We found the two policemen unharmed and made our plans for the destruction of the substance in the tank. Several demijohns of acid stood under the table and the doctor selected one nearly full of sulphuric acid.

"Open the windows," he ordered. "This is going to make a horrible stench."

Then he removed the rubber stopper from the mouth of the demijohn and I helped him hoist it to the edge of the tank. The searing liquid struck the heavy fluid in the tank with a hissing sound and bored into it like hot water poured in a snow bank. The jelly-like mass quivered slightly, and pungent, nauseating fumes arose to torment our nostrils.

Then, suddenly, as if in horrible pain and awakened to the danger of its dissolution, the plasmic substance began to heave and billow toward the top of the tank with a movement suggestive of the writhing of a huge coiled serpent in its death agony. By directing the stream of acid at the various peaks that arose we endeavored to keep it all washed down to a common level. Then a dozen peaks rose simultaneously and I noticed that one was capped with a round ball in the center of which was a black spot.

"The nucleus!" cried the doctor excitedly, shifting the demijohn. "Pour it on the nucleus!"

We were too late. The thing upreared itself with amazing speed and lopped over the edge of the tank opposite us. We dropped the nearly-emptied demijohn into the tank and rushed around to intercept it, just in time to see the ball containing the black spot separate itself from the stringy mass by which it was suspended, drop to the floor and roll under the table.

An exciting chase of several minutes ensued. The thing darted, or rather, rolled from place to place with amazing rapidity. The tile floor was cracked in a dozen places by blows from the clubs of the two policemen who assisted us. At length we drove it into the corner beneath the lavatory and advanced in close formation. I had armed myself with a large spatula, the doctor gripped a heavy pestle, the two policemen had their clubs and the chief held his automatic pistol in readiness.

As we drew close we moved with extreme caution, our nerves taut, our weapons ready to strike when the thing should make its dash for liberty. We waited breathlessly, but no movement came from the corner. I prodded the space behind the water pipes with my spatula. Still no sign of the thing we were after. Then I peered behind them and saw the reason—a hole an inch in diameter in the tile floor, probably drilled in the wrong place by a careless plumber and left unfilled because it was out of sight.

When I pointed it out to Dr. Dorp he shook his head solemnly.

"The Malignant Entity has escaped," he said. "No one in this house—in this community, even—is safe until it is captured or killed."

"You don't mean to tell me that little thing we were chasing around the room could kill anybody," said the chief.

"I am not so sure that it could kill any one now that it has been reduced to the size of a golf ball, although the cytoplasm surrounding the nucleus evidently has the power of quickly dissolving and assimilating living tissues. Its

growth, apparently, is only limited by the amount of food it can find."

"Maybe we'd better get the women out of the house," said the chief.

"The sooner, the better. I suggest also that you surround the place with men armed with shotguns. If that thing gets out and starts to grow I shudder to think of what may happen. Children will not be safe outside their own homes, and perhaps not even within them. Adults will be attacked as soon as the creature has attained sufficient size, and there is always the possibility that it may have the power to reproduce its kind. Organisms of this kind, as a rule, multiply with exceeding rapidity. Think of a thousand or perhaps a million such monsters roaming through the land. It is almost impossible to kill them because of the power we have just witnessed, of leaving the body, no matter how large it has grown, taking with it only enough cytoplasm to protect the nucleus and make a new start."

We were all gasping from the fumes that came out of the tank, and glad to get out of the laboratory.

When all were assembled in the living room the chief phoned headquarters for men and shotguns while Dr. Dorp and I explained what we had found to Miss Townsend.

After we had described our adventure in detail, the doctor said:

"It seems strange that your father left no record of his experiments with the monster."

"I feel quite sure that he left a record of some sort, though I have never seen it," replied Miss Townsend.

"Have you any idea where it is?"

"Perhaps in his safe in the study."

"I do not remember seeing a safe in the study."

"Naturally. It is hidden. Come and I will show you where it is."

We followed her into the study and she swung back one of the bookcases which was hung on concealed hinges, revealing a small wall safe.

"Would you mind opening it for us?" asked the doctor.

She turned the dial to number twelve, then pulled the lever. It did not move. She seemed surprised, set the dial more carefully and tried again with the same result.

"It's no use, I guess," she said. "The last number of the combination is twelve. He usually turned it back to one and then it was only necessary to turn it to twelve to open it. He must have locked it last night."

"Don't you know the combination?"

"No. Father was the only one who knew that."

"I wonder if you would object to our blowing the safe," he asked.

"Not if it will be of any assistance to you," she replied.

Chief McGraw, who had just finished calling headquarters, came into the room.

"Think you can get us a safe-cracker tonight, Chief?" asked the doctor.

"Get you most anything you want. What's in the safe?"

"We believe it contains some valuable information regarding the thing we were chasing a while ago."

"I'll get a man out here right away," said McGraw, going once more to the phone.

Officer Burke escorted Miss Townsend, Mrs. Harms and the two servants to the Harms home, where they were to spend the night.

Shortly afterward there arrived twenty policemen armed with shotguns and carrying several dozen bulls-eye lanterns. They brought extra weapons which were distributed to all of us who remained in the house, the chief, the doctor, the four policemen and myself. Burke was to remain on guard next door.

A ring of lanterns was placed around the house and the twenty armed men were posted at intervals between them. We then divided our forces as follows: One policeman was placed on guard in the laboratory. Chief McGraw with another policeman patrolled the upper rooms and halls. The doctor and one policeman remained on the first floor and I, accompanied by a strapping young fellow named Black, who had recently been admitted to the force, did sentry duty in the basement.

VI

THE Townsend basement was divided into three rooms, each lighted rather dimly by the yellow rays from an incandescent globe suspended on a short drop-cord. The furnace room and coal bins were situated at the rear end. The middle compartment contained a miscellaneous assortment of boxes, barrels, garden tools, household tools, canned fruits, empty fruit jars, bottles, and what not. The front room was used as a laundry.

Officer Black and I searched each room thoroughly, using a flash light in the dark corners and moving everything that wasn't fastened to the floor or walls. Several mice jumped out from behind boxes and barrels, but we saw no sign of the creature we were hunting.

We were peering behind the furnace when the sound of several loud squeaks came to us from the middle room.

With shotgun held in readiness, I moved stealthily toward the point from which the sound came. There, in the center of the floor almost under the yellow electric light bulb, I saw the fast disappearing body of a mouse under a mass of plasmic jelly.

My first impulse was to shoot, but on second thought, I decided to attempt to capture the thing alive if possible. Instructing Black to hold his weapon in readiness in case I failed, I unscrewed the lid from a large empty fruit jar and walked softly toward the center of the floor. I held the jar in readiness, expecting the thing to spring away at my approach with its former lightning-like rapidity. To my surprise it lay almost motionless on the body of its victim. I could see streaks of bright red flowing through the jelly-like mass as the blood of the mouse was drawn up for assimilation.

I clapped the mouth of the jar over the creature and still it made no effort to escape. Then, sliding a fire shovel which Black brought me, under the thing and its victim, I turned the jar right side up. It fell to the bottom of the receptacle, still clinging to the now formless mass that had once been a mouse and making no effort to escape. I put the lid in place and screwed it down tight.

"Now try to get away, you devil!" I cried, shaking the jar exultantly.

I almost dropped it a moment later as a muffled explosion jarred the building. Then I remembered Chief McGraw's safe-cracker, and hurried upstairs.

When I reached the living room, Dr. Dorp was emerging from the study in a cloud of plaster dust. In his hand was a thick, loose-leaf book.

"I have it," he called excitedly, waving the book. "The professor's diary."

"Don't get fussed over such trifles," I replied, waving the jar in return. "Look what I've got. Caught it alive, too."

I put the jar on the table and he squinted at it for a moment. The blood-bloated monstrosity had separated its shapeless hulk from the whitened bones of its victim and was sluggishly crawling up the side of the glass.

"You caught it, sure enough," he said. "I only hope it hasn't any little sons or daughters wandering about."

"I'll keep the house under guard for a couple of days," said Chief McGraw, who had come down to learn the result

of the cracksman's labors. "If there are any more of those things around they ought to show themselves by that time."

The doctor drew a chair up to the table and eagerly scanned the pages of the diary while we watched the antics of the thing in the jar. It kept getting lighter colored all the time, and more lively. By the time the cytoplasm had become transparent it was racing around, contorting its body into all manner of shapes. Sometimes it was flat, sometimes oval, and sometimes round. At times it put forth pseudopods, sometimes elongating them until it resembled a small cuttle fish.

"September twenty-third was the night Immune Benny died wasn't it, Chief?" asked the doctor.

"Right. Why?"

"Then this diary tallies with Miss Townsend's testimony. Here is the professor's entry made under that date.

"'*September 23, Nearly Midnight.*

"'*Eureka! I have succeeded. I placed a tiny drop of syntheplasm on the slide tonight as I have done a thousand times before, and covered it with a weak, sterile solution of gelatine.*

"'*I watched it steadily for a half hour but nothing happened until, suddenly, I noticed a tiny black spot forming in its center. I am positive there were no animalculae either in the syntheplasm or the solution, yet no sooner had the black spot become readily distinguishable than my speck of syntheplasm began moving about as if searching for food. Evidently it cannot subsist on gelatine.*

"'*I next introduced a rhizopod into the solution. My animal slightly resembles it, but is larger and gets about much faster. I wanted to compare the two but the rhizopod was quickly devoured. Now I know what to feed it.*'

"It is growing late so I will not read all the details to you," continued the doctor. "Suffice to say that the professor discovered his synthetically created creature would feed on nothing but living creatures. He fed it so many microscopic animals the second day that it grew to a size visible to the naked eye. Then he fed it gnats, mosquitos, flies, beetles, and finally mice, when it became so large he was forced to transfer it from the small porcelain dish in which he kept it, to a much larger one.

"The thing grew at a prodigious rate of speed. Its growth seemed only limited by the amount of living creatures it was permitted to devour. At length he was compelled to keep it in the glass-lined tank which he had been using for the culture of infusoria. Its victims were thrown into the tank alive and were quickly killed by the monster. He noticed that it was sluggish while assimilating its food, but moved with cat-like quickness when hungry. Though it had no eyes it seemed to sense the approach of food in some way and, toward the last, stretched forth pseudopods and snatched the animals from his hands.

"Yesterday the professor led two mastiffs into the room. Hardly had he closed the door of the laboratory before the monster was out of the tank. It killed and devoured the two big dogs in less than a half hour—then crawled back sluggishly into the tank to digest its meal. Thus ends the written record of the professor's adventures with the Malignant Entity. His whitened bones on the floor of the laboratory are mute testimony of what occurred this morning."

There was a moment of awed silence when the doctor finished his narrative. His eyes fell on the struggling thing in the glass jar.

"What are you going to do with it?" I asked.

"Come," he said, taking up the jar and starting for the basement. "I will show you."

The chief and I followed him down the basement stairs and into the furnace room. He opened the fire-door and tossed the jar on the glowing coals.

The thing raced about spasmodically for a moment in the intense heat, then fell huddled in the bottom of the jar. Suddenly, as if inflated from beneath, it puffed upward and outward, almost filling the receptacle in a shape that resembled a human head. I thought this only a figment of my imagination at first—blinked—and looked a second time. The face of a man stared back at me from behind the curved glass, eyes glowing with malevolent hatred and lips drawn back in a snarl that revealed crooked, yellow fangs. For a moment only the vision held. The next instant the jar was empty of all save a tiny pile of white, flaky ash and the bones of the mouse.

Dr. Dorp shut the door suddenly and noisily.

"That face," I exclaimed. "Did you see it also?"

"A queer distortion of the gas-inflated protoplasm," he replied.

Chief McGraw seemed greatly perturbed. He drew a long black cigar from his pocket, lighted it and puffed nervously for a moment.

"Distortion, hell," he muttered. "*It was a perfect double for the face of Immune Benny!*"

THE END

Pastime of Despots

THE King of Prussia, in his correspondence with Voltaire, relates an anecdote of the Czar Peter, which is worth extracting, as illustrative of Russian Despotism: "I knew Printz, the marshal of the court of Prussia, who had been ambassador to the Czar Peter in the reign of the late king. The commission with which he was charged proving very acceptable, the prince was desirous of giving him conspicuous marks of his satisfaction, and for this purpose a sumptuous banquet was prepared, to which Printz was invited. They drank brandy, as is customary with the Russians, and they drank it to a brutal excess. The Czar who wished to give a particular grace to the entertainment, sent for twenty of the Strelitz guards, who were confined in the prisons of Petersburgh, and to every large bumper which they drank, this hideous monster struck off the head of one of these wretches. As a particular mark of respect, the unnatural prince was desirous of procuring the ambassador the pleasure, as he called it, of trying his skill upon these miserable creatures. The Czar was disposed to be angry at his refusal, and could not help betraying signs of his displeasure. This is not an invented tale; it is to be found in the narratives of M. de Printz, which are preserved in the archives. I have also mentioned it to many persons who were at Petersburgh at the time, and they all attested its truth."

This is a Tale of the Weirdest Game That Ever Was Played

THE SIXTH TREE

By EDITH LICHTY STEWART

Police Headquarters,
Los Angeles, California.

Gentlemen:

The coroner's inquest held over the mutilated body of Professor Carhart to account for the baffling circumstances surrounding his death gave the verdict: "Met death at the claws and teeth of some wild beast, presumably a mountain lion."

Considering the prominent and honorary positions held by the professor in some of our foremost universities, I felt justified in suppressing the astounding diary, herewith enclosed, found by me in the dead man's room after the inquest.

I submit the diary without comment. Any conclusion derived from its perusal can be only too ghastly and unbelievable.

Respectfully,
J. Donohue, Operative.

July tenth.

AS WE entered the canyon, that dreaded sensation of oppression and suffocation surged upon me and I tore away my collar and lifted the hat from my throbbing head.

There are hypocrites who prate vapidly of the exaltation and exhilaration inspired in the human by these same mountains. Liars! Who should know more of mountains than I, who for thirty years have studied them, chipped away at their exteriors, articulated every rock and stratum in their towering frames, explored and explained their very entrails? Why, I have even proved to myself that they possess a soul, or souls — personality — malignant human emotions. God! What I have suffered!

Is it in revenge for my exhaustive knowledge of them that they torture me so? When night comes—it is night now —they shake from their torpor and become monstrosities crowding closer and closer, stooping to compress the air about my fevered head, crushing into my brain. It is only by ignoring them that I gain relief, so I am writing now in a frenzy to escape them.

As I said, we had entered the canyon. There were only the stage driver and I. I had been dismissed from the university with only the explanation that my course of study was becoming erratic. Why had I selected the little lodge at the source of this rugged ravine for my retreat? It should have been the last place in the world for me to seek rest. Yet I was here. The gray road twisted its dusty way into the gathering dusk of the mountains. The stage driver essayed a few conversational stupidities, but I soon silenced his chatter. He looked at me askance and whipped up the horses. The trail turned abruptly. The door behind was closed. Mountains reared about me on either side and a feeling of panic assailed me. I was indeed in the enemy's territory.

An hour passed in silence. Suddenly a bend in the road interrupted the monotony of the scene. With what emotions I beheld a cabin—an adobe cabin crouched back from the road against the hill! Five—no, six—gaunt trees—that might once have been willows —stood in a ghostly row before it. Its windows, glassless and shadeless like the lidless eyes of a skull, leered and peered down at us. A glance had seared it on my mind— and then we had passed it.

"What place was that?"

The driver lashed his horses to greater speed.

"A good place to keep away from after dark."

I waited impatiently for him to volunteer further information, but the fool was evidently sulky. I would wheedle.

"My good man, your reply only arouses my curiosity."

He slowed down. The road lay straight. Turning, I could see the haggard eyes of the house as it watched for the effect the driver's tale would have upon me.

It seems that some years before, after a heavy rain, some hikers had found in front of the deserted cabin five shallow graves, one beneath each tree. Each grave had contained a man. Investigation had identified them as a group of sheepherders—rough customers at the best. They had evidently spent the night in the cabin, for the place was littered with empty bottles, cards and poker chips.

Who had committed the wholesale murder and buried the bodies was never discovered. Rumor had it that the five sheepherders had located a mine back in the mountains and had hired a geologist to go with them to assay the ore, but this was never substantiated. There was no one who had actually seen the geologist or knew much about the mine.

"Where are the bodies now?"

The driver shrugged.

"Nobody claimed them, so they were thrown back into their graves, the dirt shoveled on again, and left till the judgment day."

"Well, if they are dead and disposed of till the day of judgment, why are you afraid of this place?" I asked with some scorn.

He shook his head darkly.

"There's six trees and only five have graves under 'em."

"Well?"

"They say there's a curse on this place until the sixth tree has a dead man, too."

"Bah!" I cried, "Nursery tales!"

But I must have spoken strangely, for his long whip curled out over the horses' heads and we swung around the last bend. No longer was the cabin visible, but I knew I would return.

IT must have been midnight as I approached the cabin, a midnight that held its breath and waited for something. A hush of expectancy had stilled every sound of the night. I stepped over the graves—one, two, three, four, five. There was no wind, and yet I am sure I heard a rustle, or better, a faint creaking in the naked branches of the sixth tree as I passed beneath it.

Suddenly I halted. My heart swelled and burst into a volley of stifled beatings. There could be no illusion; a wan lurid glow slowly grew from the surrounding darkness. There was a light within the cabin. Someone was there. I lashed my cowering senses to action and noiselessly approached the window.

Staggering, I clutched the window ledge for support. The uneven light from a guttering candle secured in an empty bottle disclosed what I had (God help me!) expected to see. They—one, two, three, four, five of them—they were there, the same and yet how infinitely horrible! Lifelessly, yet with terrible relentlessness, they played at their everlasting cards. Their dank hair hung in wisps over sunken eyes. The leathery skin of their faces sagged loosely over fleshless skulls. Their clothes hung in tatters, slimed with earth and mud.

And their hands! Fascinated, in terror, I watched those lean, blackened claws deal the mildewed and ragged cards. Their nails, long and broken, scratched over the rough table as they clutched at the chips. They were intent on their game, unaware of my presence. But even as I gratefully assured myself of this their eyes were on me. There was no hate, no fury, no fiendish glee in their expression, rather a blankness, a patient waiting. They had ceased to play. All the waiting in the universe concentrated about me. There was a vacant place beside the dealer. When I could resist no longer, I went within.

The dawn lay pallid on the hills when I flung away from the cabin. There was no sound or motion from the sixth tree as I shrank from its reaching fingers. When clear of it, I ran—ran in the madness of terror to the hotel, locked my door and fell sobbing in wrath and exhaustion on the bed.

I had lost! There was no depth to the agony of my soul. We had played for no obvious stakes, but only too well I knew the prize for which we fought. There would be two more nights of play with two more chances to win. I arose, bathed my scorching brow, and all day I sat figuring, figuring. As a man of science I had often scoffed at the thing called luck, for any game of cards must be reducible to some science or system. Night found me triumphant. Scarcely could I wait for the darkness that I might hasten to their humiliation.

And that night I won! I won, I say! They were waiting for me as before. The cards were dealt, and then I proved that all things are explained by science. A man so learned can hold the world in his hand, immune from the uncertainties of chance and accident!

MY triumph grew as the dawn approached. I grew reckless. I chuckled. I laughed. I taunted them in their ghastly dead faces. They sat immobile, playing, playing. Their silence infuriated me. I tried to sting them to retort, but my words found answer only in the angry mutterings of the echo from the hollow room. When, as before, the candle choked and expired like a dying man and their wasted forms faded into the shadows of the cabin, I hurled the cards after them and went stumbling and laughing into the morning, drunk with my triumph. As I passed beneath the cursed tree it dared to trail clinging, warmthless fingers across my cheek. I jerked away in loathing and derision. I still can feel the iciness of its touch.

They have asked me, these curious ignorant fools here, where I spend the nights. They talk and whisper about me in little groups that grow silent and disperse when I approach. Well, tonight is the last night, and then I shall be free and far away. If I had not been a man of science and evolved a system, then I might have known defeat; and these gaping fools might have something to fill their empty brains and furnish them with silly chatter. They would find my mutilated body, clawed as though by a mountain lion flung into a shallow grave —beneath the sixth tree.

But I shall not lose! When this night curdles into dawn I shall stuff their own dirty cards down their withered throats and crowd them back into their filthy graves, stamping the dirt upon them until it fills their mouths and blinds their staring eyes. And the tree? I shall leave it to wring its bony hands forever in impotent chagrin.

But why am I lingering here? It is time for the game to begin and—they are waiting.

The Unnatural Son

WE hope for the honor of human nature, that such events as the following do not often occur.

Among the indictments for theft, was one in which a person was a complainant against his own father, who, to appearance, was upward of seventy years of age. The party resided at Salisbury. The son testified that his father, during the absence of the former, broke open his house, and took, carried away, and concealed, sundry articles; that he procured a warrant, and went with an officer and found a part of the goods concealed in defendant's garret, etc. The officer, who is sheriff of the county, testified in substance the same as the complainant, in respect to the concealment of the goods; but on a cross-examination, said, that the door of the house was open, and no impediment was made to the search. On the part of the defendant, another son testified that the goods taken belonged to the father, and had been lent a number of years previous; that the father had divided his real property equally between himself and the complainant, taking a life-lease; that he had lent the articles in question to enable the son to prosecute his business; that differences had taken place, and the old man had requested these articles to be restored, but they were refused; that his father had gone to the house and taken them in open day, its being the only way in which they could be secured. When this witness was examined, the court enquired of the counsel for government, if he expected to impeach his testimony? It was answered, that it was not expected to impeach his character but do away his evidence, by proving that the son had purchased and paid for the articles. Its not appearing that any more than a trespass would be proved, even if the old man did own the property, a *nolle prosequi* was entered, and the action was dismissed.

The indictment charged the old man with stealing to the amount of something like one hundred dollars. Had he been convicted, he must have been sentenced to hard labor in the state prison for a number of years. How unnatural, that a son, who, it appeared, had property gratuitously bestowed on him by his father, should seek for an occasion, in the presence of the public to swear to facts, a conviction for which must have consigned that father already on the brink of the grave to servitude and a dungeon!

There Was a Logical Explanation for the Ghostly Doings in This Haunted House

THE HAUNTED MANSION IN THE PINES

By LEONARD F. SCHUMANN

THE HAUNTED Mansion stood in a lonely pine grove, just on the edge of a large old Connecticut town. That the house was haunted there seemed to be no doubt, for the different families who had been induced to occupy it all moved away after a short stay. Strange noises were heard during the night, and peculiar things happened. Only a short time ago, a farmer passing the house late at night was badly scared by a horrible wailing, which was followed by an inhuman laugh.

How long the mansion had possessed the reputation of being haunted, no one seemed to know. It was built just before the Civil War, and the owner was found murdered in his bed a few years later. He had been well-to-do, and lived alone after his three sons went into the army, for the wife and mother had died the same year the house had been built. Only one of the sons lived to come home. Arriving the day of his father's funeral, the boy was grief-stricken. He spent the night alone in the house, and the next day some workmen, passing along the road, were attracted by screaming, and the sound of running, then the smashing of glass. Rushing into the mansion, they found him putting his fists through all the window panes, and laughing insanely as the glass broke under the blows.

"They killed my father, and now I'm killing them," he shouted at the top of his voice.

He was overpowered by the men, and passed the remainder of his days a frothing maniac.

At night the mansion had an extremely dismal appearance. Standing back from the road a hundred feet or more, surrounded by great pine trees, it looked strangely forbidding to the townspeople passing that way to their homes, in the dark. Many a man and woman quickened their pace on coming near the Haunted Mansion, and instinctively looked back over their shoulders, as if expecting to find something horrible at their heels.

During the late world war the house was unoccupied for more than two years. No one in the town could be induced to rent it, so the owner's agent was compelled to advertise in out-of-town newspapers. He offered a very low rental, and would give one month's rent free to anyone willing to lease the place for at least six months.

It so happened that a man and his wife, in a city nearby chanced to read this advertisement and were impressed with the terms and the glowing description of the house. The husband was a writer, recuperating from an illness. This seemed to them an opportunity to spend a few pleasant months in the country, which would be beneficial to both. Accordingly, all arrangements having been completed by mail, the Drakes arrived, with a servant, on the first day of May. Mrs. Drake brought with her a pet monkey, to which she was very much attached. The house was always let furnished, so their only baggage consisted of two or three trunks, and some hand luggage.

The Haunted Mansion consisted of two stories of eight rooms each, an attic and a large cellar. At the rear, a coachman's house was joined to the main building. A door led from the cellar of the house to the unused stable, under the coachman's quarters. Drake and his wife occupied two connecting rooms on the second floor, and the maid had a smaller one on the same floor, in the rear. On the first floor were their dining room, living room, kitchen, and library. The other rooms they did not use. The house was lighted by gas. In the cellar was a large hot-air furnace; store rooms, rows of shelves for preserves; a coal bin, and several cords of old wood. A dozen jars of jam stood on one of the shelves, mute evidence of somebody's hasty departure.

To anyone not acquainted with the awful history of the house, its appearance was attractive, and the Drakes congratulated themselves on obtaining such a beautiful place on such reasonable terms.

They were at breakfast after their first night in the house, when Hannah, the girl, startled them by saying that the milkman had acted very queer that morning. He had winked at her knowingly, and remarked that he didn't expect to have them as customers very long. "I wonder what he meant by that?" Drake asked of his wife. "I'm sure I don't know," she replied absently.

At about ten o'clock that night, the three occupants of the old mystery house retired. The lights had been extinguished, and in a short time they were all asleep. Some time later, Drake was startled out of a dream. He sat up in bed, and listened. He could have sworn that he had heard footsteps outside his door. There they were now. Very softly at first, and then quite loud, they seemed to go up and down the hall. It was possibly the maid, or his wife. To satisfy himself, he got out of bed. Stumbling across the room in the dark, he struck a match. Peering into the next room, he found his wife peacefully sleeping. The match went out, and he made his way back to the bed and sat down. In a short time, he again heard the sound of footsteps. He trembled a little as he lit another match. He opened the door cautiously and peered out. The moonlight streamed in through the back window, and he could see faintly down the long hallway. The big house was as still as death. He could see nothing strange, and went back to bed, quite puzzled. The next morning he mentioned the incident to the women, but neither had been disturbed during the night, nor had they left their rooms.

In the afternoon, Hannah went to the cellar for a glass of jelly. The Drakes were accustomed to having tea, with bread and jelly, about four o'clock each day. Seated in the library at a small table, they were surprised by a wild scream, and the sound of someone ruh-

ning up the cellar stairs. Hannah, pale and panting for breath, ran to them and fell into a chair.

"There is someone, or something, down there in the cellar," she cried, wild eyed and trembling with fear. "I was reaching for a glass of jelly on one of the shelves, in the dark, when I distinctly heard a low, horrible laugh, like a crazy person. I was so surprised, that I screamed, and ran up here as fast as I could."

Drake was visibly worried. What did it mean? Had this anything to do with the footsteps of the night before? His wife was inclined to laugh, and jokingly remarked that she would obtain a guard for them. He got a flash-light and searched the cellar from end to end. Everything looked the same as the day before, and he could find nothing suspicious. He began to think that Hannah's imagination had gotten the best of her. Although his wife was indifferent, he found that he could not feel entirely satisfied that all was well. Both occurrences were mysterious, to say the least. Was it possible the mansion had an unsavory history? That would explain the low rental. If that was it, they would, no doubt, hear some talk before many days elapsed. People in small communities liked to talk, and it wouldn't be long before they would begin to hear things, if there was anything wrong with the old house, he reasoned.

At five o'clock that same day, Drake left for New Haven to attend a banquet of authors, and was to return on a late train. About eight-thirty Hannah went to her room. Mrs. Drake seated herself in a comfortable chair in the library, with a book, intending to read until her husband's return. Some time later she found herself staring at the gas light and feeling very uneasy. Slowly but surely the light went out and left her sitting in total dark. She sat there, afraid to move. What had caused the light to go out? There was no breeze coming in at the open window. She found enough courage to search the library for a match. Finding one, she lit the gas again. It burned with a bright flame. Somewhat alarmed, she decided to go to her room, and sit there until Drake got in. Allowing the light to stay lit in the library, she went into the hall to the dark stairway, and began to ascend. Halfway up she thought she heard footsteps following her. Nervously she looked over her shoulder into the darkness below. She stopped, trembling, and listened. There was nothing but awful silence. Regaining her courage to some extent, she climbed the remaining steps and entered her room.

Hannah was awakened by a piercing shriek. Trembling violently, she succeeded in lighting the gas jet at the head of her bed. Who had screamed? She heard someone crying, and, recognizing her mistress' voice, opened the door and hurried down the hall to the lighted room. As she went to Mrs. Drake, she stared in amazement at something on the floor. There, in a little pool of blood, lay Pong, the pet monkey, with his throat cut from ear to ear. This was terrible. What mysterious agent was at work in the lonely house? It was uncanny. Mrs. Drake lay down on the bed and sobbed hysterically. Hannah closed the door, and wringing her hands with agitation, slumped into a chair as far away from the dead animal as possible. Who or what had caused the little pet's death? Now she though she knew what the milkman meant by his remarks to her. The house was haunted! That was the terrible truth, she thought. As soon as morning came, she would leave the place. It was the last night she would spend in the big house.

Both women fell asleep from nervous exhaustion, and were awakened next morning by the door-bell ringing violently. Hannah went down to the door and was relieved to see Drake standing there. He had missed his train, and taken the first one in the morning. She explained to him in a few words what had happened during his absence. He rushed upstairs to console his wife. He was indeed surprised, and blamed himself for leaving the women alone.

Pong was buried under one of the pines and Hannah was induced to stay, although against her better judgment.

Coming back to the house after a stroll through the woods that afternoon, the Drakes were startled by seeing a heavy, black crepe on the front door. They stared in amazement. What did it mean? Could Hannah have died during their short absence? It could not be. They hurried to the kitchen, and were relieved to find her busy baking bread. They did not mention the finding of the crepe to her, for fear she would think it an ill omen, and clear out. Drake quietly went to the front of the house to remove it. Stepping on to the porch, he was dumfounded to find that it had disappeared. He searched the front yard, and around the flowers, yet was unable to see any trace of it. He was extremely puzzled by this, and went into the living room, to his wife.

"Ethel, I wonder if somebody is playing a joke on us?" he asked thoughtlessly.

"Do you call murdering little Pong a joke?" she snapped.

"Of course not," he answered. "This place must be getting on my nerves. I can't seem to think clearly. But you know yourself that crepe was not on the door when we went out today. It must have been put there by some human hand. And there must surely be something wrong with the gas. Probably the pipe is plugged up in some manner. I will send for someone to look at it."

He went to a desk and wrote a note, then, seeing a boy with a bicycle he called to him. Giving the lad a dime, he asked him to deliver the note at the gas office.

Ten minutes later Drake went to the cellar to look for some garden tools. As he entered, he was surprised to see a sickly-looking fellow standing near the door. His face wore a hard expression, and he was clothed in very dirty army clothes. He had a light, unkempt beard of several months' growth. His eyes had a fiery, piercing look. He did not speak.

Drake stared at him dumbly for a minute, then asked, "What are you doing here?"

The fellow looked at him strangely, and slowly replied, "I came here to fix the gas. Just got here. Haven't had time to look around."

Drake wondered how on earth he could have gotten there so quickly but simply said, "Oh, I see; well, go ahead with the job. I won't keep you."

He selected a spade and rake, and walked to the front of the house, with the intention of setting out some flowers, before dark. As he rounded the corner of the house, he noticed a workman, with a tool-kit, coming through the trees.

"You are Mr. Drake, I suppose," he remarked, as they met on the path. "I got your note, and came right up in the flivver. What kind of trouble did you have with the gas?"

"What!" exclaimed Drake, his jaw dropping in astonishment. "There must be some mistake. There's a workman in the cellar now trying to find the trouble."

"Can't be anybody from the gas company, because we have only two men, and the other fellow is home sick," answered the man shortly.

"Come around and see if you know him," said Drake, and together they went to the cellar.

They entered, but could see no one. The man had disappeared. The gasman looked at Drake inquiringly, and shrugged his shoulders.

"This is singular," said Drake, deeply mystified. "I can't understand it at all."

The man smiled oddly, and went to work. He found nothing wrong, and soon left. Drake pondered over this odd occurrence for a long time, but said nothing to his wife concerning it. He spent the short time before darkness came in setting out some flowers.

They sat up quite late that night, playing cards. Hannah sat in the same room, quietly sewing. Now and then she glanced toward a window looking out upon the front porch. She saw nothing, and yet some unseen force seemed to draw her gaze in that direction repeatedly. Suddenly she shrieked and pointed to the window. The Drakes were just in time to see a distorted face pull away from one of the window panes. Hannah sat helplessly staring, deep fear written plainly on every feature of her face. Drake dashed toward the hall door, and, just as he reached it, a shot sounded outside. Flinging open the door recklessly, he peered out into the dark. Someone was feebly calling for help. Going in the direction of the low voice, he found a man stretched full-length on the gravel path at the side of the house.

With the help of the two women, who by this time were somewhat calmed, he carried the man into the library and laid him on a couch. He immediately recognized him as the man he had seen in the cellar. The man was shot through the lung, and Drake could see that he would be dead in a few minutes. The man feebly motioned him to come near, and indicated he had something he wanted to say.

Drake bent over the dying man, who gasped out: "Sorry . . . scared . . . you folks; . . . crazy, I . . . guess. Had . . . grudge . . . against . . . owner. He was head . . . draft . . . board. Sent me . . . France . . . afraid . . . to . . go. No father . . . mother . . . Hell . . . hell, . . . death . . . all . . . around me. Shell shock . . . hospital . . . home . . . Came . . . here. Hate . . . owner. Played ghost . . . so . . . no one . . . rent . . . Damn house . . . stole . . . your food."

Here he rested a few seconds, and then went on in a much weaker voice, as Hannah opened his shirt, and applied a cloth to the wound to stop some of the flow of blood.

"No use . . . want . . . to die. Slept in rooms . . . over . . . stable . . . no one looked . . . there . . . here what . . . you . . . said . . . through . . . furnace . . . pipes. Knew . . . what . . . you . . . doing . . . all . . . time. Easy to fool you . . . I . . . crazy, maybe . . . Sorry . . . Sorry . . . late . . . night . . . dark, . . . dark. I . . . I . . . I . . ."

He was dead, and the mystery, so far as they were concerned, had been solved.

Singular Discovery of a Murder in 1740

A WOMAN living at St. Neots, returning from Elsworth, where she had been to receive a legacy of seventeen pounds that was left her, for fear of being robbed, tied it up in her hair. As she was going home, she overtook her next door neighbor, a butcher by trade, but who kept an inn, and who lived in good repute. The woman was glad to see him and told him what she had been about. He asked her where she had concealed the money. She told him in her hair. The butcher finding a convenient opportunity, took her off her horse and cut her head off, put it into his pack and rode off. A gentleman and his servant coming directly by, and seeing the body moving on the ground, ordered his servant to ride full speed forward and the first man he overtook to follow him wherever he went. The servant overtook the butcher not a mile off the place and asked him what town that was before them. He told him St. Neots. Says he, "My master is just behind and sent me forward to inquire for a good inn for a gentleman and his servant." The murderer made answer that he kept a good inn where they should be well used. The gentleman overtook them and went in with them and dismounted, bidding his servant take care of the horse whilst he would take a walk in the town and be back presently. He went to a constable and told him the whole affair, who said that the butcher was a very honest man and had lived there a great many years in good reputation; but going back with the gentleman and searching the pack, the constable, to his great surprise, found it was the head of his own wife! The murderer was sent to Huntingdon gaol, and shortly after executed.

Giants

ARACÆAS, of the family of the Achæmenidæ, a person in great favour with Xerxes, was the tallest man of the rest of the Persians; for he lacked but the breadth of four fingers of full five cubits by the royal standard, which in our measure must be near seven feet.

Walter Parsons, born in Staffordshire, was first apprentice to a smith, when he grew so tall, that a hole was made for him in the ground, to stand therein up to the knees, so as to make him adequate with his fellow workmen: he afterwards was porter to King James; because gates being generally higher than the rest of the building, it was proper that the porter should be taller than other persons. He was proportionable in all parts, and had strength equal to his height, valour equal to his strength, and good temper equal to his valour; so that he disdained to do an injury to any single person. He would take two of the tallest yeomen of the guard in his arms at once, and order them as he pleased. He was seven feet four inches in height.

William Evans was born in Monmouthshire, and may justly be counted the giant of his age; for his stature being full two yards and a half in height, he was porter to King Charles the First, succeeding Walter Parsons in his place, and exceeding him two inches in stature; but he was far beneath him in equal proportion of bone; for he was not only knock-kneed and splay footed, but also halted a little; yet he made a shift to dance in an anti-mask at court, where he drew little Jeffery, the king's dwarf, out of his pocket, to the no small wonder and laughter of the beholders.

A Droll Little Tale
With a Chuckle at the End

SPIRITS

By J. M. ALVEY

AFTER sunset — say about an hour after, when the shadows have had time to stretch out to their full length, and before the moon has risen—the road that winds down from Monk's Head Ridge is as lonesome and "creepy" a place as I have ever known.

It was down this little-traveled mountain trail that old Uncle Henry Jackson Brown came on his way home from Wednesday night prayer meeting one dark autumn evening. All eyes and ears was Uncle Henry as he plodded along, looking from side to side, his knees jerking up and down under his frock coat as he took up his big feet and put them down again in great haste, for the colored parson at the little church up on the ridge had preached that evening the third of a series of blood-curdling sermons on communication with the dead.

Just where the road becomes the loneliest, and Uncle Henry's eyes were bulging the widest and his heart was racing the fastest, just there, of all places on that deserted highway, he stopped, terrified, and his mouth fell open, for straight ahead, and directly over the roadway, a corpse was hanging from a tree.

"I been a-spectin' it," thought Uncle Henry. "I been a-prophesyin' it to myself. I knowed it was a-goin' to happen. I just felt it in my bones. Oh, why didn't I go home the other way! Oh, why did I take this here short cut!"

"Ho, ho!" sang the corpse. "You're late, brother, you're late. There ain't much blood left, that's a fact."

"Ascuse me," panted Uncle Henry, trembling violently, "ascuse me, but I—I don't want no blood, t-thank you. No, sir. Not me."

"What! No blood!" cried the corpse, with astonishment. "You're missin' a rare opportunity, brother, a rare opportunity."

"I hope I don't 'pear to be no ways uppish," said Uncle Henry, politely, for he remembered the parson's caution about the proper respect that should be shown to departed brethren, "but I'm an old man on my way home, sir, and if it's all the same to you, sir, I'd like to hurry on. Yes, sir, I'm in a powerful great hurry."

"Well," snarled the corpse, "you can't go till you take a quart o' blood. I only got a little left, and I can't go home myself till I get rid of the last drop."

"I—I'd rather not."

"Ho, ho!" crowed the hanged man, and began to jump up and down and swing back and forth on his rope. "'Rather not,' eh? Ho, ho! It's a rare opportunity and he says he'd 'rather not.' How much money you got?"

"Two bucks," answered Uncle Henry, his face so white that it showed in the darkness. "Two bucks is all I got. And if you please, sir, I'd be much obliged if you'd not do no more of them gyrations."

"Two bucks," echoed the corpse, paying no attention to the old man's request, but continuing to dance around in the air. "Ho, ho! Two bucks. Come slip it in my pocket."

Uncle Henry's knees grew weaker and his heart was crowding his Adam's apple and his eyes were bulged out by now.

"Come on!" commanded the hanged man. "Come slip it in my pocket. Make it snappy, brother, make it snappy!"

Uncle Henry was too weak to run. He was too frightened to go forward. He stood there, mouth open, back bent, legs sagged, feet rooted to the earth, and stared at the corpse.

"Hurry up! Come slip it in my pocket and get your blood."

"I'm a-comin'," said Uncle Henry, meekly, standing where he was, however, and trembling all the way down into his walking stick. "I'm a-comin'!"

Very slowly he advanced, one big foot at a time, one step backward for every two steps forward.

"You're powerful slow about it," remarked the corpse, impatiently. "Get a move on, man. I can't hang out here all night. Hurry up, brother."

"Yes, sir, I'm a-comin'," whispered Uncle Henry.

He was close enough now to see that the awful figure had no head. The old man shut his eyes and reached out his hand. His heart turned a somersault and his wind pipes snapped shut as he touched the corpse's coat pocket and dropped his two one-dollar bills therein.

Immediately something cold and clammy touched his face and fell slowly to the ground.

The hanged man laughed.

The old man dropped to his knees; put his hands together; moved his quivering lips in prayer. In his fervor he forgot what had been hanging over his head, and he opened his eyes and turned them heavenward.

The corpse had disappeared!

"Good-by, Lord," said Uncle Henry, cutting his prayer short. "I see my way clear to get home now. Good-by."

He put his hands down to help himself up and touched something cold. It felt familiar and he picked it up. It was a bottle with a string tied to the neck.

"Blood!" cried Uncle Henry. "Two bucks worth o' blood!" The very idea horrified him. The bottle slipped from his shaky hand to the ground and smashed.

The odor that rose to Uncle Henry's nose was not that of blood. It was a well-known smell.

"Spirits!" cried the old man. "Lord A'mighty! Spirits, sure enough!"

"Go on home, you old fool," said a voice up in the tree. "Clear out o' here. I'm goin' to let my dummy down ag'in. I hear another customer comin' down the hill. Go on. Get out o' here."

"Somebody's a-profitin' by the parson's sermons, at any rate," mumbled Uncle Henry, as he went sorrowfully on down the Monk's Head Ridge road through the dark.

HYPNOS

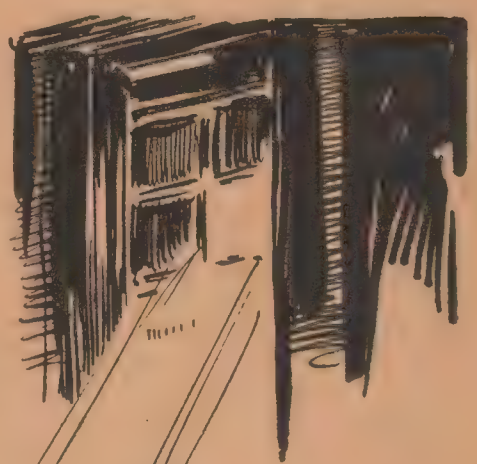
A Story of Weird Adventures

By H. P. LOVECRAFT

"Apropos of sleep, that sinister adventure of all our nights; we may say that men go to bed daily with an audacity that would be incomprehensible if we did not know that it is the result of ignorance of the danger."—BAUDELAIRE

MAY the merciful gods, if indeed there be such, guard those hours when no power of the will, or drug that the cunning of man devises, can keep me from the chasm of sleep. Death is merciful, for there is no return therefrom, but with him who has come back out of the nethermost chambers of night, haggard and knowing, peace rests nevermore. Fool that I was to plunge with such unsanctioned phrensy into mysteries no man was meant to penetrate; fool or god that he was—my only friend, who led me and went before me, and who in the end passed into terrors which may yet be mine!

We met, I recall, in a railway station, where he was the center of a crowd of the vulgarly curious. He was unconscious, having fallen in a kind of convulsion which imparted to his slight black-clad body a strange rigidity. I think he was then approaching forty years of age, for there were deep lines in the face, wan and hollow-cheeked, but oval and actually beautiful; and touches of gray in the thick, waving hair and small full beard which had once been of the deepest raven black. His brow was white as the marble of Pentelicus, and of a height and breadth almost godlike.



I said to myself, with all the ardor of a sculptor, that this man was a faun's statue out of antique Hellas, dug from a temple's ruins and brought somehow to life in our stifling age only to feel the chill and pressure of devastating years. And when he opened his immense, sunken, and wildly luminous black eyes I knew he would be thenceforth my only

friend—the only friend of one who had never possessed a friend before—for I saw that such eyes must have looked fully upon the grandeur and the terror of realms beyond normal consciousness and reality; realms which I had cherished in fancy, but vainly sought. So as I drove the crowd away I told him he must come home with me and be my teacher and leader in unfathomed mysteries, and he assented without speaking a word. Afterward I found that his voice was music—the music of deep viols and of crystalline spheres. We talked often in the night, and in the day, when I chiseled busts of him and carved miniature heads in ivory to immortalize his different expressions.

Of our studies it is impossible to speak, since they held so slight a connection with anything of the world as living men conceive it. They were of that vaster and more appalling universe of dim entity and consciousness which lies deeper than matter, time, and space, and whose existence we suspect only in certain forms of sleep—those rare dreams beyond dreams which come never to common men, and but once or twice in the lifetime of imaginative men. The cosmos of our waking knowledge, born from such an universe as a bubble is born from the pipe of a jester, touches it only as such a bubble may touch its sardonic source when sucked back by the jester's whim. Men of learning suspect it little, and ignore it mostly. Wise men have interpreted dreams, and the gods have laughed. One man with Oriental eyes has said that all time and space are relative, and men have laughed. But even that man with Oriental eyes has done no more than suspect. I had wished and tried to do more than suspect, and my friend had tried and partly succeeded. Then we both tried together, and with exotic drugs courted terrible and forbidden dreams in the tower studio chamber of the old manor-house in hoary Kent.

Among the agonies of these after days is that chief of torments—inarticulateness. What I learned and saw in those hours of impious exploration can never be told—for want of symbols or suggestions in any language. I say this because from first to last our discoveries partook only of the nature of sensations; sensations correlated with no impression which the nervous system of normal humanity is capable of receiving. They were sensations, yet within them lay unbelievable elements of time and space—things which at bottom possess no distinct and definite existence. Human utterance can best convey the general character of our experiences by calling them plungings or soarings; for in every period of revelation some part of our minds broke boldly away from all that is real and present, rushing aerially along shocking, unlighted, and fear-haunted abysses, and occasionally tearing through certain well-marked and typical obstacles describable only as viscous, uncouth clouds of vapors.

In these black and bodiless flights we were sometimes alone and sometimes together. When we were together, my friend was always far ahead; I could comprehend his presence despite the absence of form by a species of pictorial memory whereby his face appeared to me, golden from a strange light and frightful with its weird beauty, its anomalously youthful cheeks, its burning eyes, its Olympian brow, and its shadowing hair and growth of beard.

Of the progress of time we kept no record, for time had become to us the merest illusion. I know only that there must have been something very singular involved, since we came at length to marvel why we did not grow old. Our discourse was unholy, and always hideously ambitious—no god or dæmon could have aspired to discoveries and conquests like those which we planned in whispers. I shiver as I speak of them, and dare not be explicit; though I will say that my friend once wrote on paper a wish which he dared not utter with his tongue, and which made me burn the paper and look affrightedly out of the window at the spangled night sky. I will hint—only hint—that he had designs which involved the rulership of the visible universe and more; designs whereby the earth and the stars would move at his command, and the destinies of all living things be his. I affirm—I swear—that I had no share in these extreme aspirations. Anything my friend may have said or written to the contrary must be erroneous, for I am no man of strength to risk the unmentionable warfare in unmentionable spheres by which alone one might achieve success.

THERE was a night when winds from unknown spaces whirled us irresistibly into limitless vacua beyond all thought and entity. Perceptions of the most maddeningly untransmissible sort thronged upon us; perceptions of infinity which at the time convulsed us with joy, yet which are now partly lost to my memory and partly incapable of presentation to others. Viscous obstacles were clawed through in rapid succession, and at length I felt that we had been borne to realms of greater remoteness than any we had previously known.

My friend was vastly in advance as we plunged in this awesome ocean of virgin æther, and I could see the sinister exultation on his floating, luminous, too-youthful memory-face. Suddenly that face became dim and quickly disappeared, and in a brief space I found myself projected against an obstacle which I could not penetrate. It was like the others, yet incalculably denser; a sticky, clammy mass, if such terms can be applied to analogous qualities in a non-material sphere.

I had, I felt, been halted by a barrier which my friend and leader had successfully passed. Struggling anew, I came to the end of the drug-dream and opened my physical eyes to the tower studio in whose opposite corner reclined the pallid and still unconscious form of my fellow-dreamer, weirdly haggard and wildly beautiful as the moon shed gold-green light on his marble features.

Then, after a short interval, the form in the corner stirred; and may pitying heaven keep from my sight and sound another thing like that which took place before me. I cannot tell you how he shrieked, or what vistas of unvisitable hells gleamed for a second in black eyes crazed with fright. I can only say that I fainted, and did not stir till he himself recovered and shook me in his phrensy for someone to keep away the horror and desolation.

That was the end of our voluntary searchings in the caverns of dream. Awed, shaken, and portentous, my friend who had been beyond the barrier warned me that we must never venture within those realms again. What he had seen, he dared not tell me; but he said from his wisdom that we must sleep as little as possible, even if drugs were necessary to keep us awake. That he was right, I soon learned from the unutterable fear which engulfed me whenever consciousness lapsed.

After each short and inevitable sleep I seemed older, whilst my friend aged with a rapidity almost shocking. It is hideous to see wrinkles form and hair whiten almost before one's eyes. Our mode of life was now totally altered. Heretofore a recluse so far as I know—his true name and origin never having passed his lips—my friend now became frantic in his fear of solitude. At night he would not be alone, nor would the company of a few persons calm him. His sole relief was obtained in revelry of the most general and boisterous sort; so that few assemblies of the young and gay were unknown to us.

Our appearance and age seemed to excite in most cases a ridicule which I keenly resented, but which my friend

considered a lesser evil than solitude. Especially was he afraid to be out of doors alone when the stars were shining, and if forced to this condition he would often glance furtively at the sky as if hunted by some monstrous thing therein. He did not always glance at the same place in the sky—it seemed to be a different place at different times. On spring evenings it would be low in the northeast. In the summer it would be nearly overhead. In the autumn it would be in the northwest. In winter it would be in the east, but mostly if in the small hours of morning.

Midwinter evenings seemed least dreadful to him. Only after two years did I connect this fear with anything in particular; but then I began to see that he must be looking at a special spot on the celestial vault whose position at different times corresponded to the direction of his glance—a spot roughly marked by the constellation Corona Borealis.

WE now had a studio in London, never separating, but never discussing the days when we had sought to plumb the mysteries of the unreal world. We were aged and weak from our drugs, dissipations, and nervous overstrain, and the thinning hair and beard of my friend had become snow-white. Our freedom from long sleep was surprising, for seldom did we succumb more than an hour or two at a time to the shadow which had now grown so frightful a menace.

Then came one January of fog and rain, when money ran low and drugs were hard to buy. My statues and ivory heads were all sold, and I had no means to purchase new materials, or energy to fashion them even had I possessed them. We suffered terribly, and on a certain night my friend sank into a deep-breathing sleep from which I could not awaken him. I can recall the scene now—the desolate, pitch-black garret studio under the eaves with the rain beating down; the ticking of our lone clock; the fancied ticking of our watches as they rested on the dressing-table; the creaking of some swaying shutter in a remote part of the house; certain distant city noises muffled by fog and space; and, worst of all, the deep, steady, sinister breathing of my friend on the couch—a rhythmical breathing which seemed to measure moments of supernal fear and agony for his spirit as it wandered in spheres forbidden, unimagined, and hideously remote.

The tension of my vigil became oppressive, and a wild train of trivial impressions and associations thronged through my almost unhinged mind. I heard a clock strike somewhere—not ours, for that was not a striking clock—and my morbid fancy found in this a new starting-point for idle wanderings. Clocks — time — space — infinity—and then my fancy reverted to the locale as I reflected that even now, beyond the roof and the fog and the rain and the atmosphere, Corona Borealis was rising in the northeast. Corona Borealis, which my friend had appeared to dread, and whose scintillant semicircle of stars must even now be glowing unseen through the measureless abysses of æther. All at once my feverishly sensitive ears seemed to detect a new and wholly distinct component in the soft medley of drug-magnified sounds—a low and damnably insistent whine from very far away; droning, clamoring, mocking, calling, *from the northeast.*

But it was not that distant whine which robbed me of my faculties and set upon my soul such a seal of fright as may never in life be removed; not that which drew the shrieks and excited the convulsions which caused lodgers and police to break down the door. It was not what I heard, but what I saw; for in that dark, locked, shuttered, and curtained room there appeared from the black northeast corner a shaft of horrible red-gold light—a shaft which bore with it no glow to disperse the darkness, but which streamed only upon the recumbent head of the troubled sleeper, bringing out in hideous duplication the luminous and strangely youthful memory-face as I had known it in dreams of abysmal space and unshackled time, when my friend had pushed behind the barrier to those secret, innermost and forbidden caverns of nightmare.

And as I looked, I beheld the head rise, the black, liquid, and deep-sunken eyes open in terror, and the thin, shadowed lips part as if for a scream too frightful to be uttered. There dwelt in that ghastly and flexible face, as it shone bodiless, luminous, and rejuvenated in the blackness, more of stark, teeming, brain-shattering fear than all the rest of heaven and earth has ever revealed to me.

No word was spoken amidst the distant sound that grew nearer and nearer, but as I followed the memory-face's mad stare along that cursed shaft of light to its source, the source whence also the whining came, I, too, saw for an instant what it saw, and fell with ringing ears in that fit of shrieking epilepsy which brought the lodgers and the police. Never could I tell, try as I might, what it actually was that I saw; nor could the still face tell, for although it must have seen more than I did, it will never speak again. But always I shall guard against the mocking and insatiate Hypnos, lord of sleep, against the night sky, and against the mad ambitions of knowledge and philosophy.

Just what happened is unknown, for not only was my own mind unseated by the strange and hideous thing, but others were tainted with a forgetfulness which can mean nothing if not madness. They have said, I know not for what reason, that I never had a friend; but that art, philosophy, and insanity had filled all my tragic life. The lodgers and police on that night soothed me, and the doctor administered something to quiet me, nor did anyone see what a nightmare event had taken place. My stricken friend moved them to no pity, but what they found on the couch in the studio made them give me a praise which sickened me, and now a fame which I spurn in despair as I sit for hours, bald, gray-bearded, shriveled, palsied, drug-crazed, and broken, adoring and praying to the object they found.

For they deny that I sold the last of my statuary, and point with ecstasy at the thing which the whining shaft of light left cold, petrified, and unvocal. It is all that remains of my friend; the friend who led me on to madness and wreckage; and godlike head of such marble as only old Hellas could yield, young with the youth that is outside time, and with beauteous bearded face, curved, smiling lips, Olympian brow, and dense locks waving and poppy-crowned. They say that that haunting memory-face is modeled from my own, as it was at twenty-five; but upon the marble base is carven a single name in the letters of Attica—HYPNOS.

Another Story by H. P. Lovecraft Will Appear in an Early Issue of WEIRD TALES.

Here's the Conclusion of

Ebenezer's Casket

The Story of a Man Who Wanted to Die

By J. U. GIESY *and* JUNIUS B. SMITH

CHAPTER SIX

"MR. CLAY, are you awake?" Ebenezer opened his eyes. The little nurse was standing by his bed, and she held a tray in her hand, a tray with dishes on it—a tray suggestive of food. And there was sunshine streaming in through the window, and a sound of passing footsteps in the hall.

Ebenezer stared for a startled second, and then he sat up in bed.

"What—what—time is it?" he gasped.

"Eight o'clock, and I've brought your breakfast." The little nurse smiled.

"But—" said Ebenezer, like one in a daze, and paused, while his cheeks went slowly red.

The little nurse shook her head. "You see, after the doctors got done with that horrid tube, you were so tired out that you went to sleep," she said.

Understanding came on Ebenezer in a flash. It was morning—and he was alive! Something like an overwhelming sense of chagrin descended upon him. He was alive, and—he was almost sorry. He stared at the little nurse in a rather miserable fashion and nodded, without words.

She set down the tray on the bedside table, went to the closet and brought back his clothes. "Now you dress and eat your breakfast," she suggested, "and I'll go get that money you gave me last night."

"You will not," said Ebenezer, and his tone was almost fierce. "When I give a thing I give it."

"But—"

"But nothin'. I gave it to you an' I reckon that stomach tube shindy put an alibi on everything else. Now I guess I'll dress."

Miss Coombs went out, and Ebenezer rose. He clenched his hands into knotted fists, and regarded them fixedly before he drew on his shirt. There was something savage in the way he pulled on his trousers. His mood was one of a rapidly mounting rage. He finished dressing and put on his hat.

And then he took it off and stared at the tray on the table. He was facing a serious fact. If he had died according to schedule, everything would have been all right. But, instead of dying, he had slept all night and waked up very much alive. And he hadn't a cent on earth. Yesterday he had given away his every possession—his money—the old home place—even the loose change in his pockets—and here on the table before him was a perfectly good breakfast going to waste.

He laid his hat on the bed, sat down and ate in a ruminative fashion, his brow contracted in thought. There had been a reason for all he had done, of course—a reason why he had made a fool of himself as he undoubtedly had. And the upshot of his thinking was that he decided to attend to that reason first. All at once to Ebenezer that duty became a pressing need of the present, beyond which the future could wait. The future—he had thought himself able to know it. He finished the coffee in the little pot on the tray, at a gulp, and scowled.

He reached for his hat and rose. He found his suitcase in the closet and let himself into the hall. He found the stairs and went down them with lowered eyes. He didn't want to meet the glances of any one he passed. He was dreadfully embarrassed. Last evening he had come here boldly and announced that he was going to die at one minute past eleven, and—he hadn't kept the date. Instead, he had gone to sleep.

He literally sneaked out of the front door past the office and gained the street. He set off downtown with the suitcase in his hand.

And with every step he took, his chagrined rage mounted. By turns he felt cold and hot. He had made a fool of himself. He had been a dupe, a sucker. He was broke. He was walking downtown now because he had not the price of a ride. He set his jaws and plodded onward with a heavily purposeful stride.

He reached the boarding house district at last, and mounted a set of steps to a pair of old-fashioned double doors. One of them was open, and Ebenezer went in and opened another without troubling to knock.

The room into which it opened had probably been at one time the parlor of the house. Now, however, it served a purpose of another sort. In its center was a table supporting a sphere of glass on a jet black cushion. Oriental hangings and various charts marked with peculiar signs and symbols were distributed around the walls.

Ebenezer glanced about.

The door of an adjoining room opened and a man appeared. He was dark, round-faced, stout. He was clad in a bathrobe and pajamas.

It was *Peri* the *Persian*. Ebenezer knew him, even though in his present garb, untricked of his professional trappings, he seemed a lot less Persian, and very much more just ordinary soft-fibered man.

For a moment he eyed Ebenezer, then he advanced with a tentative greeting. "Good morning. Have I not seen you before, my friend?"

"You have." Ebenezer put down his suitcase. "And now you see me again." There was something ominous in his manner.

Peri the Persian appeared to mark it, even as he essayed a further question:

"And what advice can I give you on this occasion?"

Ebenezer glared as he answered the suggestion: "You can't give me none. I've had enough already, an' it's got me in dead wrong. Th' last time I was here, you told me I was due to die at one

**The first half of this Story Appeared in the April issue of* WEIRD TALES. *A Copy will be Mailed by the Publishers for* 25c.

minute after eleven o'clock last night, an'—I guess you can see I didn't."

"Dear me. Is it possible!" Peri the Persian laid two chubby palms together and turned his head slightly to one side.

"It is," said Ebenezer shortly.

"I'm sorry," said Peri the Persian.

"Are you?" Ebenezer glared again. "Well—you're goin' to be a lot sorrier still unless you explain. Here I took what you said as gospel truth, 'cause you said the stars couldn't go wrong, an' I—I gave away all my things. I ain't got a cent left or nothin', but what I got in this suitcase an' on my back, except a coffin I bought to be buried in yesterday afternoon."

Peri the Persian drew back a pace. "Dear me," he said again. "It is most unfortunate, I am sure. I fear I must have fallen into some slight error in considering your horoscopic figure."

"I know darned well you did," said Ebenezer. "An' you're fallin' into another if you think you can get away with it without my takin' it out of your skin."

"Wait," said Peri the Persian and held up a flabby hand. "Let us not be swayed by passion. Let us remember the words of the sages. To err is human, to forgive divine."

"Well—" Ebenezer took a deep breath, "there ain't anything divine about me this mornin'. I ain't dead yet, an'—"

"Wait—wait," Peri interrupted. "Let me explain, my friend. All fallacy is human. The stars are true in their verdict always—"

"You've said that before—an' I believed it." Ebenezer advanced a stride.

Peri the Persian retreated to the table with the glass ball and sat down in a chair beside it.

"And I say it again. If error there was, that error was mine. I admit it, deeply as it grieves me to think you should have been led into any unhappy action through any fault of mine. But—" he sighed deeply—"I am only human. You say you gave away all you had?"

Ebenezer nodded. "Every darned thing."

"Hah!" said Peri and bounced up. "If you will sit down, I shall examine your charts again." He crossed the room to a desk and began rummaging in a drawer. In a moment he was back at the table with a mass of papers in his hand.

Ebenezer watched—as a cat might watch a mouse. Here sat the cause of all his troubles—the man on the strength of whose ability to read the destiny of man as predicated by astrological computations, he had done everything—had resigned a lucrative position and stripped himself to the skin. And he didn't intend to let himself be played for a sucker again.

Of course, the man looked troubled. One couldn't deny the fact. The face he bent over the papers he was consulting was clouded. Peri the Persian seemed considerably upset. And, of course, as he said he was only human—anybody *could* make a mistake. But—

All at once Ebenezer found himself staring straight into the other man's eyes—and the other man's expression had altered, grown into a thing of sheer amaze. His lips opened. They gave forth words.

"This—this is a remarkable thing after all, Mr. Clay. I—have never encountered anything like it in all my days. The error is mine wholly. You must not blame it on the stars. Even in this instance they have proved true harbingers of fate. Fate indeed has brought all that has transpired about. What has occurred was to befall through an error—and the error I admit. It was mine, and in making it, I became the agent of the destiny the stars predicted for you. I—er—I misread a single sign. The corrected reading shows the true meaning beyond any further possibility of mistake. You—rather than dying, my friend, as I—er—erroneously told you—I should have warned you instead that you were fated to become absolutely bankrupt on a certain date—which date was yesterday. And by your own admission, that is exactly what happened. But—what is gold, man, as compared to life?"

Ebenezer gasped. His brain was whirling. The stars had said he was going bankrupt—through an error—and Peri the Persian had made it—and he, he was bankrupt according to schedule—and Peri the Persian admitted his error—he confessed it like a man. He didn't question nor quibble about it. He said he'd been wrong, and that he was sorry. And one couldn't manhandle a fellow being who frankly acknowledged a fault—especially when the stars had led him to it—made him one of the agents of fate. So what was the use!

He got up slowly and lifted his suitcase and pulled down his hat. "Well—lookin' at it that way, I reckon it was due to happen, an' there ain't anything to do about it. If you was wrong, you can't do nothin' but admit it, an' you have. So—well, I'll be goin'."

He made his way outside and went down the flight of steps to the street. He set off along it in rather aimless fashion. He hardly knew what to do next.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ON the nearest corner he paused. Armistead had told him to come back if he wanted a job. But the idea did not appeal to him in his present mood. He shrank acutely from the thought of returning to the place of his former employment and admitting that he had not died.

There was a sensitive strain in Ebenezer—the same strain that had made him susceptible to the words of Peri the Persian, first and last—that rebelled at the mental picture of any such action—that lashed out at what he felt he would see in Armistead's eyes when he appeared before him, even though the man did not laugh. And, too, he recalled his former employer's expressed hope that he would feel different after breakfast.

Ebenezer's cheeks began to tingle as he recalled his return to conscious existence—the sight of the little nurse standing beside his bed with his breakfast tray in her hands. No—come what would, he wasn't going back and ask Armistead for a job.

He could go to Mrs. McCloskey's, of course. But from that step he also shrank. He had written that note—and left it wrapped about the wedding present of a dying man, to Irene. There would be more or less embarrassing moments to be faced if he returned. He—he had even invited the widow and her daughter to attend his funeral. Even now they might be telephoning Lynn.

Lynn! Ebenezer frowned. He had paid the colorless little mortician three hundred and fifty dollars for a funeral he wasn't going to furnish—and—Armistead had delivered the gray casket to the undertaking parlors, of course. And that casket—since he wasn't going to use it—was his. He might not have a cent in his pocket, but most certainly he had a perfectly sound and usable casket on his hands.

Lynn, then, was the answer to his immediate conduct. He would go and see him and try and arrange some sort of adjustment of the funeral that wasn't coming off. He nodded to himself. He'd go see Lynn. Once more he began to walk.

The suitcase bumped his leg and he frowned. He was in a mental state where little things annoyed him out of all proportion. Yesterday he had had something over five hundred dollars and a farm, and now—now he didn't have a thing except the coffin the casket company should have delivered to Lynn.

Hot, tired, and in a more or less irascible mood, he finally reached his

destination, ascended the steps and passed inside, turned into the office and once more confronted the colorless man at the roll-top desk.

The mortician stared. There could be no doubt but he recognized Ebenezer.

"Mr. Clay, just what is the meaning of this?" he began rather stiffly as Ebenezer set down his suitcase.

Ebenezer drew a handkerchief and mopped at his face. He put the handkerchief away and cleared his throat. "It was all a mistake," he began in embarrassed fashion. "Did they deliver that casket here this mornin'?"

"Wait," Mr. Lynn interrupted. "Mr. Clay, just what lies back of your—er—peculiar actions?"

Ebenezer explained. "I had my fortune told, an' they said I was goin' to die, an' I believed it. I reckon I was a sucker, but that's how it was, an' I thought I'd come over an' see you, an' have a talk an' see if we couldn't fix things up."

Mr. Lynn laid the tips of his bloodless fingers together. He studied Ebenezer, or his tentative proposition, for some moments before he said slowly: "But, my dear man—what is there to fix?"

"Why—why—" Ebenezer stammered. He opened his lips and closed them again very much like a landed fish. "About that funeral," he managed at last.

Mr. Lynn nodded. "Oh, yes—what about it?"

"I won't need it," said Ebenezer.

Mr. Lynn nodded again. "Apparently not—just yet."

"Then—" Ebenezer paused.

"I stand ready to fulfill my part of the contract at any time," said Mr. Lynn. "It is no earthly fault of mine if instead of dying last night, as you led me to believe you would, you return here today alive. In fact I am of the opinion that in failing to keep your part of the agreement, you have forfeited your rights. But—I would not be inclined to stand on any such technical grounds, since it seems you were the victim of an —er—misunderstanding. I waive the point in your favor. I am ready to give you the interment agreed upon whenever you require it."

"But—" Ebenezer blinked. He took an unsteady breath. He was very uncomfortable indeed. There was an almost accusing something in the little mortician's eyes as well as a hint that Ebenezer had vitiated the terms of their contract, in his words. "But—I'm broke," he went on at length. "I was so sure of dyin' like I said, that I—I gave away everything I had."

"That is unfortunate," said Mr. Lynn in an impersonally sympathetic fashion, "but it does not concern the terms of our agreement in the least."

Ebenezer stiffened. The man was a crook. That's what he was. He had paid him three hundred and fifty dollars and he was going to keep it—if he let him do it. His voice steadied, sank to a deeper timbre. "So, you ain't goin' to give any of it back?" he inquired.

Mr. Lynn shook his head in almost tolerant fashion. He smiled very slightly. "Really, my dear man, is there any reason why I should? You bought and paid for my services with the distinct understanding that they would be needed within a certain definite time. What do you think you ought to get?"

Ebenezer rose. He towered above the little man in his chair. He clenched a hand from sudden emotion. His voice came a trifle thickly. "I think I oughta get th' police. You're a skinner. I paid you three hundred and fifty dollars, an'—"

Said Mr. Lynn distinctly: "Did you get a receipt?"

Ebenezer gaped. His jaw sagged. He sank back again in his chair and stared. The colorless little man was right. He had simply paid over his money in cash, and if he should call in the authorities as he had suggested, it would be Lynn's word against his. In fact, it began to look to Ebenezer as though Mr. Lynn held the whip hand, in view of the story he would have to tell if he called in the police. Then—

"Well, how about that casket?" he asked in a throaty tone. "I ain't goin' to use it, an' I bought an' paid for it before it was sent up here, an' I can prove that much at least."

Rather surprisingly, Mr. Lynn hesitated in his answer. "Oh yes—the casket—of course. It's yours. Do you want to take it with you?"

"It's here then, is it?" said Ebenezer. "I asked you that before an' you didn't answer. All right. I don't need it, but I gotta have some money. What say I sell it to you? You buy stuff from th' Armistead Casket Company, don't you? How much?"

Mr. Lynn pursed his lips. He considered. "Twenty dollars," he said at last.

"Twenty—" Ebenezer began, and paused. Something cold and steely crept into his eyes. "No, you don't." He got up again. "Twenty dollars for that box! Why—I paid a hundred for it, factory price. Where is it?"

"Inside," said Mr. Lynn rather vaguely. "I'll give you thirty-five."

Ebenezer shook his head. Mr. Lynn's manner was one of discomfort out of all proportion in a man who had just made three hundred and fifty dollars for doing nothing and was now trying to get a bargain rate on a brand-new casket. "I don't reckon you will," he replied. "It's mine, an' we'll go inside an' see it."

"Fifty," said Mr. Lynn.

Ebenezer eyed him. "Say," he remarked, "you're actin' sort of funny about this. Now I want to see that casket."

"Very well—very well." Mr. Lynn rose. "Come this way, if you insist."

He turned toward a door in the rear of the office and Ebenezer followed, treading close upon his heels. He dogged him through a second room, where several caskets were ranged on trestles for display, and into another and up to the side of a gray, sidebar-handled coffin.

It was an Armistead Company product as Ebenezer knew at a glance. But he turned from it after a single appraising look. There was accusing suspicion in the gaze he directed on his companion.

"This ain't th' one I bought," he began, and paused, as his eyes traveled past Mr. Lynn and fell on a second casket.

He knew it. He had made it himself for a definite purpose. In a couple of strides he reached it.

And then he stopped as abruptly as though he had run to the end of a given length of rope and been jerked up.

There was no doubt about its being the casket he had made for his own use. A dozen little individual touches identified it to him beyond all chance of error, but *—there was the body of an unknown man inside it!*

For a moment of clearing comprehension, he stood looking down on that unresponsive bit of clay—that interloping corpse. And then he swung about to face the mortician. "You danged little crook," he said in a voice that shook with emotion. "So you was goin' to sell my box, an' put me away in just anything at all. Well, I reckon this puts you just about where I want you, at last."

CHAPTER EIGHT

"BUT, my dear Mr. Clay—" Mr. Lynn's appearance was even more bloodless than common. "I assure you, you are making a mistake. This casket I showed you at first—"

"Mistake," Ebenezer cut in roughly. "Say—forget it! I made this box myself. If there's any mistake, you made

it when you thought you could lead me in here an' fool me. I guess you wasn't wise that I've worked for th' Armistead people for over two years. Now cut out th' stallin' an' come across." He jerked his hand at the casket behind him. "What's th' meanin' of this? Who's this party in my coffin? Fifty dollars? Well, I reckon you would give me fifty for it, bein' as you had it filled. Don't you reckon you could let me have a hundred, seein' I can prove whose it is?"

"I'll give you a hundred rather than have any unpleasantness, Mr. Clay," Mr. Lynn agreed in a rather small voice. "You see, the—present occupant died rather suddenly and his people wished to ship the body East. I knew I could duplicate the casket from the Armistead people, of course. Under the circumstances—if you'll return to the office—I'll be glad to give you my check and consider the matter settled."

"Hold on," said Ebenezer. A speculative light crept into his eyes. The body in the casket he had thought yesterday to occupy himself, was going East. East? Why—he'd like to go East himself—East—back home—where yesterday he had sent the deed of his farm to Claire Markley. Claire—he seemed to see her gray eyes looking into his. He took a long breath. "I reckon we won't settle things so fast. Yesterday I was sort of pressed for time, but today I ain't in any hurry. I'd like to go East, too."

"After I've given you my check for a hundred dollars," said Mr. Lynn, "there is no reason why you cannot go anywhere you please."

Ebenezer nodded. All at once he grinned. "I shouldn't wonder if you do feel that way about it. But that ain't th' point. I ain't aimin' to spend th' hundred. I'll need that when I arrive. I reckon you better give me a ticket to Massillon, Ohio, an' about two hundred in cash an' keep th' coffin, seein' that you've got it sold, an' you can add fifty to that since I've decided not to be embalmed, an' maybe twenty for flowers—"

"Wait," said Mr. Lynn, cutting off the flow of words that threatened to engulf all his unearned increment in their flood. "Did you say *Massillon, Ohio?*"

Ebenezer nodded again. "I did. That's where I was born and raised."

"Then," a light of decision crossed mortician Lynn's face, "I think this can be arranged. This body is going to *Canton* and it must be accompanied by an attendant, of course. If you wouldn't mind going with it—" He paused.

"Well I'm darned," said Ebenezer and jerked a hand at the casket. "Is he a Buckeye? Why—" his eyes widened, "I can take him to Canton an' get over to Massillon in less'n an hour. Say, that's funny ain't it?"

"It is," said Mr. Lynn, in a tone of relief. "This entire affair is most peculiar. But if it is agreeable to you, we'll go into the office and I'll give you two hundred and fifty dollars and arrange for you to accompany the body."

"Two hundred and seventy," said Ebenezer firmly.

"Two hundred and seventy," said Mr. Lynn, and sighed.

"When's he goin'?" Ebenezer questioned, glancing at the body inside his coffin.

"This evening."

"All right," said Ebenezer. "But you might as well make it three hundred. That will leave you a hundred an' fifty profit, after you've collected for th' box."

"I'll—I'll give you three hundred and not a cent more," said Mr. Lynn and wet his lips with his tongue.

"All right," said Ebenezer again, and smiled. He was seeing Claire Markley's face with its gray eyes again, as he followed the colorless little mortician back to the office.

He was still seeing it and the rolling hills of Ohio and the old farm place, as Lynn produced his check book and filled in a blank, and tore it out and held it toward him.

"I'll—arrange your transportation, by this afternoon. Shall I send it to you, or will you call?" he said as Ebenezer's fingers closed on the bit of paper.

"I'll go get this cashed an' come back this afternoon," Ebenezer returned and rose.

"About three. The body leaves at four-thirty," Lynn suggested.

Ebenezer nodded, picked up his suitcase and walked out. He cashed the check, had some lunch and returned to the Lynn Undertaking Parlors and Mortuary Chapel promptly at three o'clock.

Thus it came about that he journeyed eastward that night as the attendant of the gray casket containing the body of another than himself—that now and then, as the train ran eastward, he descended from it when it stopped, and walked up to the baggage car and inspected the box about the casket and satisfied himself that it was all right, and went back to his seat and his thoughts.

And mainly he thought that he was going back—back to Massillon, Ohio, and the home place, and Claire Markley. Hour after hour he sat looking out of the window at the speeding landscape, between which and his introspective eyes, swam the mental image of her face. He was going back, and if—*if* she was still Claire Markley. A slow flush crept at such times into his cheeks. Back there no one would ever know he had made a fool of himself, because he had been "easy" enough to believe what Peri the Persian told him about the stars.

The stars—they had said he was going bankrupt—or Peri the Persian said so. But—they hadn't said he was going to stay bankrupt, and he—he had dug something out of Lynn the very next day—not much, but something—a few dollars and the ticket on which he was riding East, as the guardian of the casket he had thought himself fated to use. So maybe the stars had been right about it, after all.

They had said he was going bankrupt, and he had—and—and—surely this going back to the old scenes—the old hopes that were warming his heart with each swift mile that fell behind him—held in it something of the quality of fate. Maybe Peri the Persian had been an agent of fate, after all, even as he had declared—maybe his error had been the means fate used to bring her ends about. Ebenezer didn't know, really—and the nearer he got to his destination, the less he cared. The past was past, and the future—he wasn't troubling any more about the future—save as it held Claire Markley—the present he felt—provided it could be made to hold her, would be quite enough.

HE reached Canton one sunny afternoon. He delivered the body and took a receipt—he was taking receipts now—from the undertaking firm to which it was consigned.

An hour later he boarded a train and sat with his nose against the window, drinking in the flitting vista of rolling hill and plain. "Home, home," sang the wheels beneath him. He was going "home."

At Massillon he got down. He was going home, and he knew the road and he went. With his suitcase bumping against his legs, he trudged straight through the town and on out into the surrounding country for some three dusty miles, before he came to a house set back amid trees some distance from the roadside, opened a gate in a fence before it and made his way into the yard.

He went toward the house as one travels long accustomed ways and suddenly he paused.

A woman came around the corner of the house.

She caught sight of Ebenezer and stopped.

For a moment of recognition, she stared, and then her lips opened.

"Ebenezer Clay," she exclaimed and came swiftly toward him, her cheeks flushing. "Why—whatever on earth?"

Ebenezer grinned. "Hello Claire," he said. "I—just got a hankerin' to come home. Did you get that deed?"

Claire Markley nodded. "Yes. Yesterday, and I couldn't imagine why you sent it. At first—" her gray eyes widened, darkened, "I thought maybe you were—dead."

Ebenezer winced in almost imperceptible fashion at the word. "I—I reckon you read it, didn't you?" he said.

"Yes." Claire nodded again. "Of course. But there wasn't a single scrap to explain, with it."

"I—I thought—" Ebenezer looked up at an apple tree beside him. "I sort of figgered it would explain itself. Didn't you notice what it said?"

"Why—" all at once Claire's color deepened to a crimson. "It said—it said—" she glanced down and caught up a fold of her dress in her fingers.

"It said 'in consideration of Love and Affection,' didn't it?" said Ebenezer. "Well—that's all there is to it, except that—Claire—I—I'd sort of like to go with th' farm."

Claire Markley lifted her face. Her eyes were shining. They were like stars—they hinted all manner of things for the future. She drew very close to Ebenezer. "Why, Ebenezer," she said in a voice between tears and laughter. "Why—I don't mind."

"Claire!" Ebenezer dropped his suitcase and took her into his arms.

THE END

Sham Fight

BEFORE the city of Bostra, the Christian and Mussulman armies were set in battle array and Romanus the governor, who thought it the best way to secure himself and his wealth, though at the expense of honor, soul and conscience, took an opportunity to let Caled, the Mussulman Chief, know that he had more friends than he was aware of. He rides before the rest of the army, and with a loud voice challenges the Saracen general, who quickly came forth to him; he tells him, that he has for a long time entertained a favorable opinion of the Mahometan religion and seemed to be very willing to renounce his own upon condition that Caled would secure him, and what belonged to him, which he readily promised. Romanus added, that he had, upon Serjabil's first coming to besiege the town, advised the inhabitants to submit to the Mussulmans, and pay tribute; but that instead of being heard, he had only purchased the ill will of the citizens by his good counsel. In short, he said whatever he could think of that might ingratiate himself with the Saracen, and proffered his service to go back again, and persuade the besieged to surrender. Caled told him, that it would not be safe for him to go back again, without having first fought with him, because then it would appear plainly how well they were agreed, which might occasion some danger to him from his own people. So they agreed to make a show of fighting, to color the matter the better; and after a while Romanus, as being beaten, was to run away. The armies on both sides saw them together, but nobody knew what they said. Immediately this mock combat began, and Caled laid on so furiously, that Romanus was in danger of his life, and asked Caled, whether that was his way of fighting in jest, and if he designed to kill him? Caled smiled and told him, "No, but that it was necessary for them to show something of a fight to prevent their being suspected." Romanus made his escape, and indeed it was high time, for the Saracen had handled him so roughly, that whosoever had seen him after the combat, would have had little reason to have thought he had fought in jest, for he was bruised and wounded in several places.

War Horses

TWO of the regiments which had been quartered in Funen were cavalry, mounted on fine black long-tailed Andalusian horses. It was impracticable to bring off these horses, about 1,100 in number, and Romana was not a man who could order them to be destroyed lest they should fall into the hands of the French. He was fond of horses himself, and knew that every man was attached to the beast which had carried him so far and so faithfully. Their bridles, therefore, were taken off, and they were turned loose upon the beach. As they moved off, they passed some of the country horses and mares, which were feeding at a little distance. A scene ensued such as probably never before was witnessed. The Spanish horses are not mutilated, and these were sensible that they were no longer under any restraint of human power. A general conflict ensued, in which, retaining the discipline that they had learned, they charged each other in squadrons of ten or twenty together; then closely engaged, striking with their forefeet and biting and tearing each other with the most ferocious rage, and trampling over those which were beaten down, till the shore, in the course of a quarter of an hour, was strewn with the dead and disabled. Part of them had been set free on a rising ground at some distance; they no sooner heard the roar of the battle than they came thundering down over the intermediate hedges, and catching the contagious madness, plunged into the fight with equal fury. Sublime as the scene was, it was too horrible to be long contemplated, and Romana in mercy, gave orders for destroying them; but it was found too dangerous to attempt this and after the last boats quitted the beach, the few horses that remained were seen still engaged in the dreadful work of mutual destruction.

The Final Chapters of

DRACONDA

The Big Novel About a Trip to Venus

By JOHN MARTIN LEAHY

CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

DRACONDA EXPLAINS

THE next day St. Cloud was borne to his sepulcher—rock-hewn, in that mountain range whence we had first seen Conderogan. Shortly afterward, however, the desecrating body of our unfortunate companion (at the instigation of Sallysherib) was taken from its vault, and the place of his sepulcher is now unknown—probably, I have always thought, the blue waters of the Uava.

The great sun was setting when Henry and I stepped ashore at Conderogan, flooding sky, earth and water with a beauty that Turner himself never even dreamed.

At length (darkness had now fallen) we issued from our chambers and directed our steps toward that apartment into which Draconda had conducted us on our arrival—and from which we had gone to witness that awful meeting with St. Cloud

As we drew near, we heard Draconda singing, accompanying her song on a guitar-like instrument. The words were in Greek, their burden:

"Sorrow, sing a hymn for me
That shall only joyful be."

We paused, waited till the last golden note had died away. As we moved forward, came the clang of steel as the guards grounded their weapons, and a word or two to announce our coming. Each guard stretched forth a hand, grasped his curtain and drew it, and in a moment we were in the queen's presence.

The princess was there, and old Mayto. Draconda's eyes lingered on her lover.

"You are fatigued, my Henry," she observed, with some solicitude. "I said you ought not go."

"'Tis nothing, Draconda," he returned. "And this remains: no matter what his evil, yet Morgan was our companion in hours, in days, in an adventure never to be forgotten; and memory and comradeship called me to his tomb."

The queen was silent for a space. She had laid aside her guitar. Her chin was resting on her palm, her brows slightly drawn together, and her eyes fixed on Henry Quainfan's face in a look of curious intensity.

"Let the dead past bury its dead," said Draconda.

A little silence.

"It seems," Henry returned, somewhat irrelevantly I thought at first, "that Poe had a legion of Truth marching under his awful banner:

"'And the angels, all pallid and wan,
Uprising, unveiling, affirm
That the play is the tragedy, "Man,"
And its Hero the Conqueror Worm.'"

The dark eyes of Draconda seemed to smile mournfully—and yet, strangely enough, they seemed to remain unchanged.

"Yet he had another banner," she said, "one radiant, iridescent, ineffable. How do you explain the legion marching under his banner of Love? that sweetest, perhaps, of all love poems?—

"'And neither the angels in heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful Annabel Lee.'"

"What is the explanation, my Henry? Dreams—only dreams? And those rainbow glimpses of things cosmic and spiritual in *The Power of Words* and *The Colloquy of Monos and Una?* The explanation, my Henry? Only dreams?"

"That *was* my explanation, Draconda."

"And now?"

"Now I do not know," he said.

She smiled wanly, with a curious spiritual sadness.

"'Twas thus you explained your picture of me," she said, "and alas, I my soul vision of you—even I, who should have known!"

He looked at her inquiringly.

"How so, Draconda?"

There was a swift change: she suddenly drew herself erect, the thought shadows vanishing from her eyes and features.

"*'Come!'*" she said in a thrilling voice, "*'we will leave to the left the loud harmony of the Pleiades, and swoop outward from the throne into the starry meadows beyond Orion, where, for pansies and violets, and heart's-ease, are the beds of the triplicate and triple-tinted suns.'*"

"I follow," said Henry Quainfan.

Her lips severed for speech, then suddenly broke into one of her wondrous smiles as she sent a roguish glance in my direction, a glance that seemed to say:

"Now, my Farnermain, you get yours!"

At any rate, I did!

Explain? Draconda did explain. At the beginning, I felt confident, in spite of her air of certitude, that she could neither undo nor cut this Gordian knot which her tongue had tied. But she did. And her anacalypsis brought a sharp realization of the curious impedimenta under which our flesh-enshrouded spirits march along toward the terrible-wondrous Gates of Destiny.

Science, who has destroyed so many of our cherished superstitions (and, I fear, some things that were not superstitions) would destroy, too, the belief in anything *supernatural;* and thus, under the influence of her materialistic teaching (more or less unconsciously, that is) we often pronounce the inexplicable an hallucination or a hocus-pocus—and think we have delivered a crushing refutation.

Now, it is scarcely necessary to remark, I am not, and never have been, scientific. On the other hand, though, I have never been a believer in those phenomena, noumena and so on that must be called either hallucinations or things supernatural—in other words, I simply regarded such things as hallucinations and let it go at that.

And so, in spite of all the amazing things we had heard or seen, I had not entertained the idea that there might be something supernatural about this mysterious Draconda.

"Of course, it is obvious," she said, after a meditative pause, "that I have been on the earth; indeed, I said so. And yet, when I told you I was born on this planet, in this very palace of Conderogan, and that I never had dreamed that that awful interplanetary abysm could be crossed by mortal men (and, of course, I meant women too) I spoke the truth—paradoxical, absurd though it may seem to you.

" 'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.' "

Here she paused, looking at us whimsically. Henry and I, however, merely gave each other a bepuzzled glance—said nothing.

"Yes, my Henry and my Farnermain," nodding her head prettily, "when I said that, I gave the truth. And yet—"

Again she paused.

"And yet?" I suggested.

"And yet," Draconda told us, "I did not say I never had dreamed that that terrible intermundane gap could be crossed by men!"

"What!" I exclaimed.

There was another one!

She laughed.

"You are making it worse and worse, Draconda," said Henry Quainfan. "Instead of explaining the matter, you are enhancing our bewilderment."

Draconda smiled at him with whimsical, love-touched eyes.

Suddenly she turned her look to me.

"Well, my Farnermain," she queried sweetly, "what think you?"

"In Heaven's name, Draconda, what did you say if it was not that?"

"Well, Farnermain the Myopic," she laughed musically, "you tell me what I said. Bethink you well."

I spent perhaps a minute in careful recollection but could not find anything that changed the matter in the least, and then I spoke:

"You said, O Draconda, you never had dreamed that the gap between Terra and Venus could be crossed by men."

"You are sure?" she asked.

"Sure!" I returned.

"You are in error, my Farnermain," she smiled. "I did not say that."

I stared at her dumfounded.

"My Farnermain, you should pay more attention. And you too, Henry. But perhaps you know. What was it I said?"

"I do not know, Draconda. I thought it was what Rider said. But I am not sure. I must have let some little thing escape—an adjective or something like that. I think you are bewildering us with a play on words. What I am beginning to think, Draconda, is this: There must be something supernatural about you."

"At last!" she exclaimed. "Of course, though, that is only one of those many words under which man hides his ignorance."

"Just so," Henry nodded.

"And yet," after a brief pause, "you have not the key that will unlock the mystery?"

Henry Quainfan shook his head.

"I said *mortal* men," Draconda explained.

"Oh!" exclaimed Henry.

"Plain, my Farnermain?" she queried.

"As two and two make twenty-two."

"I thought so," she smiled.

"O Draconda," I asked, "aren't mortal men men?"

She laughed.

"Of a surety they are men. How could they not be men?"

"And yet you said—"

Here I broke off speaking, for a sudden thought had come to me—a thought that seemed to explain everything. And yet it had come before, but I had dismissed it without a second thought.

"I see!" cried Henry Quainfan. "I see it all now!"

"So do I," I said; "at any rate, I think I do. It seems—no, it must be. You came, O Draconda, not as a mortal woman but in the spirit. In other words—though the thing seems incredible—you lived on the earth, died there and were born again on Venus; and, in some way, the memory of your terrestrial life was not blotted out—or, rather, the memory of your terrestrial lives."

"Wonderful, wonderful!" she cried, clapping her hands.

"Then that is it?" I said.

"Of a surety it is."

"Why didn't I think of that before?" said Henry Quainfan. "I am sorry, Draconda, that I thought—"

"Hush," she said. "Hush."

Just think of it—here we were talking with a woman who had been dead!

And this certainly, was not her first reincarnation, for it left one hundred terrestrial years to be accounted for, and that century undoubtedly had not been lived in a single life.

In all likelihood, she had known two or three, or more, lives on the earth. Perhaps she had lived in the time of Helen of Troy. Mayhap she had seen Helen—indeed, had been Helen. And perhaps she had lived in the time of Moses, of Cleopatra, of Christ—had seen the Savior bleeding on Calvary. She had, mayhap, lived in the time of Cheops, or wandered on the banks of the Nile in that far time when the first of the pharaohs was. Perchance she had been a prehistoric woman—a troglodyte of the Pleistocene.

Well, for that matter, so perhaps had I!

"Then," Henry Quainfan said, "when Morgan exclaimed, 'I saw you—with my own eyes I saw you—' he meant that he had seen you interred."

"I suppose so," Draconda nodded. "That must have been what he meant, for I know nothing of what happened after death. I then was in a dreamless sleep, was nothing, as it were, and in the black profundity of nothing—and, when I awoke, I was here, on the glorious planet Ishtar."

"You lived in Babylonia?" Henry said.

Draconda nodded.

"Of course," she went on, "I had no means of discovering how long I had been sleeping. Why, or how, my slumbering spirit left the earth and came through those icy deeps of space to the Planet of Love, I, of course, do not know. Nor can I ever know—at least while the flesh imprisons me in, or that darkness is which comes when the spirit leaves the flesh. Perhaps, though, on a day it will be known, for I do believe that we shall some time live in Paradise world (to use that phrase for want of a better one) and there mayhap we shall see those things now involved in the profundity of darkness and mystery.

"From that Paradise, or spirit, world—where nothing sordid is—I believe we have been banished for a time, undoubtedly because of some sin committed; and I believe that memories of that old home linger in our souls, though very few regard them as such—memories aroused by grand scenery, music and love. And, when the day of our redemp-

"Just so," she nodded: "only visions and memories, dim and uncertain, dusky as those moonbeams which, to the temples of lost Atlantis, struggle down through the gloom of the sea."

She was silent for a while, a curious, dreamy expression in her eyes.

"Of the several Draconda's," she went on suddenly, "who yet were one and the same being; of that Draconda of the prehistoric age; of that girl who knew the Euphrates before, and she who knew it after, the walls of Babylon rose on high—of these Draconda's, and all the others, I shall tell you, and fully, some other time. No, not today.

"But there is one of whom I should tell you now—Morgan St. Cloud.

"The story, though, shall be brief—as the terrible always should be.

"I was then that Blanche of whom you heard him speak; only a girl, and he came—a man to catch any woman's fancy, handsome and charming and debonair. And not only that: the intellectual attainments of Morgan St. Cloud heralded (so I thought, and so, indeed, I still think) a conspicuous, if not commanding, position in certain branches of the sciences and of discovery. But there was another Morgan St. Cloud, one as yet unknown to me—that Morgan St. Cloud who gained the ascendancy, blasted a life which should have been one verdant with achievement, happiness and fame.

"By a curious coincidence, among those studies in which he was deeply interested at the time of our meeting, was Assyriology—"

"Strange!" was my involuntary ejaculation.

Draconda turned her eyes upon me with a curious expression in their somber depths.

"How so, my Farnermain?" she asked.

"Once, and only once," I made answer, "I appealed to him for guidance through some dark Babylonian labyrinth of myth, theology and science: never shall I forget that look which rushed across his face when I lay the book before him and pointed out the puzzling passage—that sudden, impetuous, *insensate* way in which he thrust the volume from him across the table. On the instant, however, he collected himself and asked pardon—explained that, when it came to any of the phases of Assyriology, his knowledge was virtually nil."

The queen smiled wanly.

"It was, in fact, my Farnermain, profound!"

"Then why his profession of ignorance?"

"Alas, my Farnermain, who can tell in what strange way Guilt may strike whom she has in bondage?

"I have spoken of Morgan St. Cloud's interest in Assyriology as a coincidence. And so it was. For at that very time I was deeply occupied in preparing myself for as thorough an exposition of that science as possible to one who had seen the very hand of the sculptor at work on the monuments. How scholars would have stared and rubbed their eyes! For, with all due respect to our Rawlinsons and Grotefends—with their Sumerian theories, homophonies, polyphonies, polyideographies, and so on—despite all their admirable, their great achievements, Assyriology yet bears a closer resemblance to that melancholy ruin called Birs Nimrud than to the wondrous Euriminanki (known to the Hebrews as the Tower of Babel) which, in that spot now so deserted and silent, aspired to the very glories of heaven.

"That Morgan St. Cloud was astonished, astounded, easily can be imagined. But I did not reach forth to him the key to the mystery.

"However, let me hasten to the end.

"As I have told you, I loved Morgan St. Cloud—I was even betrothed to him. Fortunately, however, his other self was revealed: there is no occasion to dwell on particulars; suffice it to say that the iridescent veil was rent asunder and I saw the terrible truth.

"However, not a little to my surprise, he showed no resentment—was as charming and devoted, at our now infrequent meetings, as ever he had been in our happiest hours. Had it not been for my experience in life (which experience I may call one deep and troubled) my heart doubtless would have been softened toward him. But, even as it was, I never dreamed of that thing which he had in mind.

"The opportunity for which he was biding his time soon presented itself—at an informal archery meet. It so chanced (and yet it was not chance after all) that we at length found ourselves, he and I, alone beneath the great and gnarled branches of the oaks. And there it was that he did the deed.

"I had stooped for one of my arrows. Why it was I do not know; but, in some way—that which man in ignorance calls the sixth sense—I suddenly became aware of danger, terrible, impending. I looked up, and screamed. For there was Morgan St. Cloud with his arrow to the head and my heart the target.

"He was momentarily disconcerted. But, with a terrible exclamation, he loosed, and the bolt struck me full in the throat, flinging me to the turf in the agonies of death.

"Then he began calling wildly for help. An utter blackness blotted things out. When it cleared away (for a few moments only) I found myself in my mother's arms; heard, as the numbness of death stole over my senses, the voice of Morgan St. Cloud, in grief-stricken tones, explaining how—*his arrow had glanced from one of the tree-trunks and, thus deflected, struck me down!*"

CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

WAR

THE day following, disturbing intelligence reached the queen: his pontifical highness, Sallysherib (whom we had not seen since our arrival at Conderogan) had left for the city of Seeamnos, about ninety miles north of Loom and on the farther side of a beautiful, though shaggy, range of mountains.

"I expected something of the kind," said Draconda.

"And the meaning?" queried Henry Quainfan.

"Trouble," she returned, "war perhaps, for in all likelihood he is plotting an insurrection. That he is plotting something I know: what, the near future will tell us."

"But isn't there anything you could do to forestall his plot, whatever that may be?"

"Nothing. Nothing can I do to Sallysherib. His arms are the most terrible of weapons: they are invisible, strike like a bolt from the blue. Well, I also have my arms and my friends—friends even in the temple of Sallysherib, perhaps."

"Why not risk it?" I suggested.

"Risk what, my Farnermain?"

"Why, seize Mr. Sally, and explain things afterward."

She smiled a little.

"You forget, my Farnermain: you are in Loom; and, if you knew—if I were to do that—no, I can not do that. It is simply out of the question."

"I was thinking—" began Henry Quainfan.

Draconda looked at him inquiringly.

"Yes?" she suggested.

"Since the queen, any member of the royal house, I believe you said, can be married by no one but Sallysherib himself, then we can't be wedded unless—"

"He comes back," said Draconda.

"But if he dosn't?"

"Then there will be war—war!"

"In that case, Draconda—well, can't you find a way out of the difficulty?"

tion comes, then perchance we shall learn (or remember) that for which we were banished to the flesh and the gross things thereof and that blackness which men call death.

"How full must the starry spaces be of ghosts—not the ghosts that dwell in superstitious minds but the slumbering souls of humans! And how glorious must be their long-lost home, that home in which some day they will dwell again!"

She fell silent—that strange expression I have spoken of now strong on her features. It was there always, even when she smiled her quick and wondrous smile, though at such times it did but lurk in the background, as it were.

A hundred and twenty-five years of life! What she must have gone through in that century and a quarter! What deep acquaintance she must have made with passion and sorrow—what terrible memories must haunt her hours!

"You know," said Draconda, "in myths and things mystical much truth lies hidden. But long ages, misunderstanding, ignorance and what not have done their work only too well. For instance, there is that strange mystery of the Pleiades: why has this group of stars, in many lands, from the Euphrates to the Andes, and during the course of long ages, exercised so powerful a mystical and religious influence over the fancies and hearts of mankind? Indeed, that influence has been felt even in the halls of Science: for what was it, if not this very thing, that led Maedler to assign to Alcyone the magnitude and glory of the Central Sun?

"'Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?'

"But—what I had in mind is the sacred number seven. Who, now, can unlock the mystery of that?"

"And who," queried Henry Quainfan, "the mystery of the number four—the mystic number among the Indians of America?"

"Not I," said Draconda. "But to return.

"'Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.'

"Now, there are seven days in the week, the wonders of the ancient world were seven, Rome was builded on seven hills, the Apocalypse is a book of sevens, there were seven wise men, seven champions of Christendom, seven stars in the Pleiades—"

"But, in reality," observed Henry, "as photography has shown, there are over *two thousand!*"

"And the Egyptians," Draconda returned quickly, "called the Pleiades *chooa*—which means *thousands!* How, my Henry, do you explain that?"

He glanced in my direction.

"Our old friend Nisroch again, Rider," he smiled.

"Just so," Draconda said. "And how did those men of old time know that the planet Saturn is ringed?"

"Did they really know it, Draconda?"

"Yes."

"Then Proctor was right: they had telescopes!"

"And why not?" she smiled. "For remember that, after the light and science of the ancient world—after the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome—came the ignorance and terrors of the Dark Ages: and that was not the first time the light of intellect and imagination was quenched in impenetrable darkness and mystery.

"Old, old is the world, old or ever the great ice sheets (another unfathomable enigma to the scientists of earth) came creeping southward. Yes, old the world, and countless the prehistoric Ninevehs and Babylons engulfed in the sands of the ages.

"But that mystic seven: What significance it may have, I shall not presume to say, but my lives on the planet earth were just seven—the first in some prehistoric age (ere Sirius had fled across to the western border of the Galaxy) the last in the nineteenth century in the city of New York, where I met Morgan St. Cloud."

Henry Quainfan made an exclamation.

"Sirius on the eastern border of the Milky Way!"

"Just so," Draconda nodded. "There can be no shadow of uncertainty about it, for in that land, as in Egypt and elsewhere, Sirius (and the Pleiades) was worshipped—great temples builded in his honor. Yes, thousands of years ago it was when I first saw his silvery beams—how many thousands, who can say?"

"Who indeed?" echoed Henry Quainfan. "The star's proper motion, though, shows that sixty thousand years have passed since it shone on the eastern border of the Galaxy!"

Draconda smiled a little.

"I rather antedated Adam, didn't I?"

"Slightly," he nodded.

"And this," said the queen, "brings us to an instance of that truth I have spoken of hidden in myths, for the Chaldeans had a story founded on this very journey of Sirius across the Galactic belt—with which story, as given by Al-Sufi, you are doubtless familiar."

"Yes," Henry nodded. "Canopus murdered his wife, Rigel, and fled away to the southward to escape the vengeance of the pursuing Al-abu—Sirius, his sister.*

"But, Draconda: that land where you first saw the Dog Star and the light of the sun?"

Draconda shook her head.

"I do not know. From the height of the pole-star there—Alpha Cephei—the place was twenty degrees or so from the equator: more than that I can not say."

"Yucatan or Mexico, perhaps," I suggested.

"No," she smiled; "our style of architecture, for one thing, was different."

"By the way, Draconda," Henry queried, "in any of those lives, were you married?"

The dimples rushed into her cheeks.

"Strange to say, my Henry," she laughed, "not once! But—"

"Yes?" said he.

"I was in love—well, more than once."

"With Morgan St. Cloud?" he asked bluntly.

Draconda's dark eyes met his with a curious half-smiling, half-mournful expression.

"Yes," she said. "But mark this: in all my loves, from that of the girl Draconda (for Draconda was my name then, and I fancy before that, even) who so long ago beheld the blazing glory that is Sirius to the love of Draconda the Venusian for Ta Antom—"

"Great Heaven," he broke in, "did you love that man?"

"I did, my Henry. But listen: in all those loves of mine, my heart was sad and troubled; that was because I had not found you, my dream one, dearest of men. For I thought that you were only—*an ideal!*

"And in this, alas, how many women are Dracondas!"

"Ah!" I exclaimed, for (as they say) a great light had burst in upon me.

"But," I added, "unlike you, O Draconda, they have no visions—yes, visions, but no pictures of those who come to them—for they come as shadows in dreams."

**Possibly the Arabian story may be based on a tradition of Sirius having been seen on the opposite side of the Milky Way by the men of the Stone Age.—Gore Astronomical Essays, page 22.*

"Nay—alas, no!" sighed the queen. "If Sallysherib does not return, we shall be married—if we win."

"And if we don't?"

"Then we shall die unwedded," said Draconda.

Followed a few days of troubled expectancy on our part (and in all likelihood Draconda's) but nothing happened—that is, until the fifth day after the intelligence that Sallysherib had hied himself northward reached the queen.

Doubtless the Venusians sensed the first gusts of that impending storm, but to eyes such as Henry Quainfan's and my own, the waters of life about us lay enshadowed or asparkle in their wonted hues and placidity.

"You know," said Henry, "I was just thinking (and the thought is one to appall) of the infinite interdependence of events."

"Anan?" said I rather languidly, for I confess that wasn't what I was thinking about.

"The infinite interdependence of events, Mr. Bumppo," he repeated sweetly.

"In other words—?"

"In other words, even the minutest event, the most insignificant of acts sends its pulsations, so to speak, to the remotest star."

"Great Zeus!" I exclaimed, sitting up and staring at him. "Say, come down to earth."

"There you go, Rider! 'Down to earth!' There it is, the whole miserable story, in a nutshell. That's just what the matter is: man keeps his nose down to earth—like a pig. Yes, 'tis so—like a grunting porker. He has grunted and rooted the earth long enough: 'tis time he looked overhead."

"Not if it's to see what, right now, you are seeing!"

I made a sudden sweep with my hand.

"There! Watch, and you'll see Sirius rock in his orbit!"

He smiled a little at this conceit of mine.

"Hopeless, Rider; hopeless. All the same what I have said is physical truth. Why, there is your favorite, Poe:

"'You are,'" he says, "'well aware that, as no thought can perish, so no act is without infinite result.'"

"Fine!" I exclaimed. "That is, in the way that Poe meant it—not as an expression of physical fact."

"He never wrote lines more true, Rider. Listen:

"'We moved our hands, for example, when we were dwellers on the earth, and, in so doing, we gave vibration to the atmosphere which engirdled it. This vibration was indefinitely extended, till it gave impulse to every particle of the earth's air, which thenceforth, *and for ever*, was actuated by the one movement of the hand.'"

"Superfine!" I told him. "You'll be introducing me to the Lady Ligeia next!"

"Well, then, if you won't believe either Joe or myself, possibly you'll believe one of the soundest thinkers and mathematicians of the age:

"'In fact, if we consider the matter attentively, we see that there cannot be a single atom throughout space which could have attained its present exact position and state, had the history of any part of the universe, however insignificant, been otherwise than it has actually been, in even the minutest degree.'

"Again:

"'But in reality it is only because our conceptions are finite that we thus look forward to an end even as we seek to trace events back to a beginning.'

"And yet again:

"'If a grain of sand contains in its state, figure, and position, the picture of the universe as it is, and the whole history of the universe throughout the infinite past—and who can doubt that this is so?—it contains with equal completeness the history of the universe throughout the infinite future. No other view is compatible with the assumption of the Almighty's infinite wisdom, and no assumption which limits the wisdom of God is compatible with our belief that He is supreme in the universe.'"

"This is all very profound and, in its way, interesting," said I; "but here is the point: what is it all about?"

"It came to me, Rider, as I sat thinking of the awful things we may see here, for Draconda, though she does not dilate on the subject, greatly fears, I know, terrible turmoil and the horrors of war. I was thinking of that, running back along the series of episodes and events which led up to the present momentous situation—back to that insignificant, *accidental* beginning. For, as you know, it was an accident (that is, what we in our ignorance call such) which led me on to the great discovery.

"But why stop at that so-called beginning? Why not go on—back, through a million-million ramifications of thought, passion and matter, to *the* beginning, if ever there was one!—back to, and beyond, certain atoms in that nebulous cloud from which the sun and his planets, and ourselves, evolved?"

"Come back to earth!" said I. "Yes, sir, to earth. For, if Mars tramples the Loomians underfoot, you won't have to go back, for the cause of his wrath, to any atoms, or configuration of atoms, in the fire-mist of La Place. You won't have to go beyond a certain conglomeration of atoms right here on this planet—a conglomeration two-legged and bald-headed."

"Sallysherib."

"Sallysherib—yes. And Mynine too, may Beelzebub bless her soul!"

"Don't be too hard on poor Mynine, Rider. After all, now, what has she done—except go to Sallysherib?"

"Great heavens, isn't that enough! She hasn't started yet: you mark my word on that. Just forget your atoms, your nebulas, your infinite interdependence of events, and all the rest of it, and keep a sharp lookout in Mynine's direction. Unless I am greatly mistaken, you'll not have long to wait."

Nor did he.

For on the very day following, as Nytes was returning to Conderogan from the gardens of Ulmis, a mob headed by Mynine attacked the little party, killing or wounding every one save Nytes, who was taken captive.

Instantly the mob vanished; and, though every effort was made to apprehend the perpetrators of the dastardly deed, no trace of the princess or her captors was discovered.

CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR

WE SEE NYTES

SEVEN days after the capture of the princess, an army of insurrectionists attacked the little city of Noto, just this side of the aforementioned mountain range, which is called the Seeamnos. The insurrectionists were repulsed after fierce fighting; the commander was for departing. This was Mynine's opportunity: she opposed the commander, won the army to her and at its head, as fearless as a lioness, attacked and captured Noto, putting every man, woman and child to the sword. The city she destroyed with fire.

Draconda hurried troops to the place, and Mynine, after destroying several towns and laying waste the country, took her little army up the range, coming to bay in the Untes Pass.

When he had received a reinforcement, the queen's general, whose name was Soto, attacked the enemy, but he was repulsed, and with fearful losses, Soto himself being amongst the slain.

Then occurred the battle of Tyno. Had Fortune favored the queen's army, the insurrection would have been crushed then and there. And—terrible thought!—the army of the queen would have been victorious had we been five minutes

or so later in arriving at that cursed temple of Teenemtos.

On hearing that a great battle was imminent, Mynine left the Untes (though her army held the place) and hurried toward the spot of the impending struggle.

When she reached the field of battle, the insurrectionists were in full and disastrous flight. But Mynine's remarkable military genius turned this defeat into a victory—turned what would have been for the queen a crushing triumph into an awful rout. Draconda's army was all but annihilated.

This sudden victory placed Mynine—a mere slip of a girl—generalissima of the insurrectionist armies.

She did not pause but wheeled about and struck straight for Reetam, a walled city about twenty miles to the north of Tyno; this place she captured, putting every man, woman and child to the sword.

And now I come to Tigras—the queen's brother. This prince, eight years (Venusian) younger than Draconda, commanded an army on the northwestern borders of Loom, whither he had advanced against those semibarbarous and ferocious tribesmen of the North. Tigras had inflicted terrible punishment upon these Venusian Scythians (who, like their ancient fellows of the earth use human skulls for drinking-bowls) and was moving southward when met by the emissaries of Sallysherib. The prince saw accession to the throne dangling before his eyes—and went over to the enemy. This apostasy of Tigras was a severe blow to Draconda, for it took a large and veteran force over to the rapidly-growing host of Sallysherib—for, of course, though out of the turmoil himself, his was the mind directing this terrible drama of struggle, blood and destruction.

On meeting her, the prince fell a victim to Mynine's charms, remaining callous to the terrible treatment accorded his captive sister, who suffered before his very eyes.

Retribution, however, soon came: following a drunken fight over Mynine, Tigras was struck down by the dagger of one of the high priests—the assassin being literally torn to pieces by the enraged soldiers.

"Word has just been received," said Draconda one day, "that Mynine is gathering her forces preparatory to crossing the Seeamnos, by the Untes Pass. We shall have about eighty thousand men, I believe, while, according to the reports of my spies, Mynine and Sallysherib already have nearly one hundred and sixty thousand. What accessions are to follow, that we shall learn soon enough."

She smiled a little at that glance which I sent in Henry's direction.

"But it takes more than mere numbers to win a battle," Draconda went on lightly. "Remember Marathon and Cannae, Issus and Arbela, and all the others.

"Now, about twenty-five miles from the pass as the eagle flies, there is—I'll show you the spot on the map. I know it well. This is the valley of Long, and see: at this place, where the flanking hills approach most nearly, my army will give battle to the invaders. Fifty thousand men are in that place even now. There, my Henry and Farnermain—there will my warriors conquer Mynine's proud host."

"You forget something, O Draconda," I observed.

She looked at me interrogatively.

"What, my Farnermain?" she said in that whimsical way which I found so charming.

"This: there will Draconda *or Mynine* conquer."

She laughed.

"As I said, it takes more than warriors to win a battle, my Farnermain. Fear not. There you will see another Cannae."

"Very likely," said I to myself. "But who is Hannibal and who Varro?"

Shortly after this, we started for that place in the valley of Long which Draconda had chosen. As the bee flies, the spot is about forty-five miles from the city of Loom; by the road, it is some fifteen miles farther.

The journey, which lay almost due north, was made on horseback, the queen riding astride: no Loomian equestrienne rides sidewise. Mayto, the old philosopher (not a little to my surprise) was one of the party.

The day following, about two o'clock, we were met by General Angto himself, and, as the great sun was setting, going down in a sky that was dripping with blood, we reached the place where, ere long, the great hosts would meet, and where were pitched seventy thousand men. Ten thousand more were to arrive on the day following.

And those seventy thousand warriors greeted Draconda with a rolling shout of

"Ningtos a ta leenam!"

Which means, "Victory to the queen!"

The valley was here cultivated and quite treeless, while the hills on either side, very steep and broken, were clothed in dense forest. On the left wing of the army, was the River Thayno, which, at this point, laves the base of the western hills. It is here a deep and noble stream, with an average width of about two hundred and fifty feet.

The next day, the expected ten thousand arrived.

Three days later, Draconda's scouts reported that Mynine's vast army was beginning the descent of the Seeamnos. According to the reports that had been coming in, her host outnumbered Draconda's almost three to one.

I took cheer in remembering Marathon, Arbela, and all the others.

Draconda was commander-in-chief, something no queen before her ever had been.

A day passed uneventfully, and on the second, just as the sun reached the meridian, Mynine's great army came swarming into view, coming to a stop, in full battle panoply and array, when a mile or so lay between the opposing hosts.

Draconda's arm was drawn up for battle. But Mynine did not attack, and the queen, what with her numerical inferiority, was going to stand strictly on the defensive.

All was tranquil in the valley when the shades of night gathered over the fateful place.

It was a little after the noon of night when I lay down, but it was a long time ere sleep came to me. And this night I saw again that mummylike woman of my dreams.

I had ascended a lofty hill; through an opening in the dense forest, I was surveying Mynine's great host. Twilight was deepening to darkness. I was all alone; but suddenly I felt an unseen presence, and in a moment saw standing there directly before me a ghostly form—that white-robed, veiled creature who had warned me never to set eyes on Draconda.

"So you have seen me at last, O man! Again I come to warn you. You took not heed of my warning never to set eyes upon the queen, and the curse fell. Ha, ha! And the curse fell. And tomorrow destruction falls upon Draconda. Another Cannae—ha, ha! Another Cannae indeed! But for you, O man (that is, if you will avail yourself of it) there lies a way of escape—"

"Away!" I cried. "Away—"

And here I was awakened by Henry, his hand gently shaking my shoulder.

The sun had just appeared. Bright and brighter became his beams, flashing on weapon and armor. Higher and higher swung the great, glorious orb—in whose sway the great worlds are as peppercorns. And there we watched and waited.

Draconda rode through the ranks, giving words of encouragement, and the warriors cheered their wondrous and mysterious queen until, as the saying has it, the ground shook.

Just after mounting, in one of those moments of carelessness that come to us at times, I dropped my Winchester, and the weapon, striking a rock, was so badly damaged that it was no longer a rifle, though not irreparable. Henry had left his rifle in Loom, as he could not yet use his left arm. He had his revolvers, however, and Draconda—who wore a close-fitting coat of golden mail, a golden helmet and jeweled-hilted sword—had my cartridge-belt, with its pendent weapon, enzoning her waist. As for myself, I had St. Cloud's revolver.

About nine o'clock, Mynine's vast army began to move down toward us, Mynine, with her glittering staff, riding a little in advance.

When something less than a half mile from the foremost of the queen's warriors, she and her army halted—and then an awful thing happened.

Scarcely had she stopped when I perceived a woman, naked to the waist, being dragged forward by two human brutes.

"Nytes!" cried Draconda, who had been looking through Henry's glasses.

From the ranks of the enemy arose a rolling shout, in which I caught the princess' name, and an awful murmur ran along the serried lines of our legions.

Nytes' hands were bound before her; the girl was blindfolded.

The queen had turned ghastly pale.

The two men who had led the princess forward of a sudden drew back. Mynine rode a little distance in front of Nytes, who was facing us, and wheeled her horse round. Then she rode straight toward the captive with back-drawn sword.

Suddenly her weapon sent a great flash of silver across the plain, and the next instant she delivered the stroke, severing the princess' head.

CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE

THE END OF IT ALL

A LOW, awful cry broke from the lips of Draconda; a deep murmur ran along her waiting legions, while, from the ranks of the enemy, came a shout like the pealing of thunder.

"Here they come!" I cried.

Draconda straightened up with a sob, shook herself as if throwing off a palpable something, then suddenly gave her attention to the pressing matters of the moment, the pallor on her cheek alone attesting the effect of that brutal murder.

She had drawn her army up in the form (roughly) of a half moon, the convex side toward the enemy—like Hannibal's at Cannae. Her left wing, as I have said, was protected by the river. The right, I have forgotten to say, was protected by a strip of rugged, rocky and bush-covered ground, which would render a successful flank attack very difficult indeed. However, it was believed, before Mynine formed her army for battle, that no such attack would be made, and when ready to move her host down upon us, that belief became a certitude.

In the front ranks of the center, Draconda had placed her weakest infantry. Behind, and on either side, were her veteran foot-soldiers. The line of infantry reached from the rugged rocky ground just spoken of to the river, and in front, at the horns of the crescent, was posted the cavalry, which, by the way, was wonderfully efficient.

Draconda, Henry, a number of generals and myself, with the queen's body-guard, had taken station behind the center.

The whole of Mynine's terrible army was coming to the attack. It was in a wedge-like shape and in mass formation. Half her cavalry—which outnumbered our own almost two to one—was on either wing at the rear. Mynine, I may remark, was not leading the attack in person.

On across the plain, with echoing cheers and shouts, came those thousands upon thousands of warriors, and I must say that it was a grandly terrible sight.

Suddenly their cheering and shouting was drowned in a deafening roar from Draconda's warriors, a deafening and rolling shout of—

"Victory to the queen!"

On they came, the ground quivering from the mighty tread, and then suddenly, with an awful roar and clash, the warriors met.

The queen did not try to stop that awful charge. By her orders, the infantry in the center retreated: it was the business of those veterans in the rear to prevent the enemy from breaking through the lines.

Back we were pressed, and back and back, and ever more swiftly. And at last, the warriors in front suddenly were flung about us as one could fling a bunch of bees with a flirt of the hand, and in an instant we were enveloped by friend and foe, in inextricable confusion and struggling like fiends incarnate.

Pandemonium reigned. The cries of the combatants, the shrieks of the wounded and the dying, and the clashing of arms and shields—it all was indescribable, deafening, horrible.

I soon emptied my revolver, and I took unholy delight in the belief that I got a man with every one of the bullets. I had no opportunity of reloading the weapon. My horse went down. I had lost my revolver. Somehow, though, I managed to get hold of a sword. I succeeded in running a man through who was coming at me, though it was owing to luck and not to any skill of my own that I emerged the victor.

The next instant, I saw Draconda's horse plunge madly and disappear. The enemy were trying their best to kill the queen. She, too, had emptied her revolver.

Henry Quainfan shot a man who was in the act of cutting her down with his sword—killing the warrior with his last bullet. I saw one of her guard leap in front of her, pushing her back as he did so, and receive a stroke aimed at the queen: the sword struck the man on the right shoulder and clove down through armor, flesh and bone to the heart. Before the warrior who wielded the sword could free his weapon, the queen drove her own blade through his body and clean to the hilt, avenging the death of her guardsman. Even as she ran the man through, I saw her lover's horse go down, and then I lost sight of them both.

For two burly fellows were flinging themselves upon me. From one side a sword came leaping out and transfixed one of them. Somehow, with the blade of my weapon, I saved myself from the blow of the other, but the next instant he struck me a terrible blow with his shield, driving me sidewise and to my knees. Back leaped the steel to run me through; but Draconda's sword shot into view, and the man went down with a crash of shield and armor.

All this time we had been carried steadily back. All had lost our revolvers. As I struggled to my feet, I drove my sword through a man who was coming at the queen. Her warriors seemed to be increasing about us now. On the other side of Draconda, was Henry Quainfan; I saw that his face was bloody, that he was wielding a sword—and then of a sudden I saw no more.

Down I went plunging through myriads of stinging and spluttering lights; about me sounded a great clashing and shouting, as if hell was spewing forth all its fiends—then suddenly I plunged into the utter blackness of oblivion.

When consciousness returned, I found Henry Quainfan bending over me and Draconda's cool hand on my forehead.

"How's everything?" I asked.

"Fine," said Henry. "And you, Rider?"

"Then it worked!" I cried. "It worked!"

"Yes, my Farnermain," nodded the queen. "And I am so glad to see you yourself again. At first I thought you were dead—but it was only a blow, not a wound."

"And the battle?" I asked. "Tell me. And let me see."

"Wait a little," admonished Draconda. "Wait till you have recovered somewhat. And the battle is another Cannae, my Farnermain—another Cannae, indeed! And Mynine herself is a captive. But is there aught I can do for you, my Farnermain?"

"Thanks, O Draconda, but soon I shall be quite myself again."

Henry, I soon noticed, had received a slight scalp wound; somehow his left arm had escaped hurt in that awful melee.

I was still weak and dazed, but strength was coming swiftly back and to my mind clarity of thought and perception.

We were on a high knoll, whence could be got a good view of the field. I mounted to the summit and surveyed the bloody field of battle.

"See!" exclaimed Draconda, her face flushed and her wondrous eyes shining like stars. "See, my Farnermain! It is indeed another Cannae! The enemy is surrounded. Mynine's warriors are being cut down by thousands, like the grass before the sickle."

I turned away and covered my eyes with my hand.

"I am glad, Draconda," I said, "and yet I sicken at the sight."

"Yes," returned the queen, laying a hand on my shoulder. "But it must be. What a monster, after all, is man—when banished to this terrible land of the flesh!"

It was indeed another Cannae. A little while after I received that terrible blow, Draconda's warriors succeeded in staying the advance of Mynine's host. The queen's army was again in the form of a half moon, but this time was the *concave* side against the enemy. As Mynine's army pressed forward, the queen's right wing faced to the left, using its flank as a pivot, and the left wing swung about to the right. The cavalry engaged Mynine's horse, and the foot fell upon her flanks. General Angto soon routed the horse on her right flank, and he then dashed over to her left, by a brilliant coup capturing Mynine herself as he did so, and put the cavalry there to flight. Then, swinging his men out into a long line, he came thundering down on the rear of the infantry.

Mynine's horse rallied and came bravely to the attack, but it was again routed, half of it being destroyed; and Draconda was bothered no more by Mynine's cavalry.

Of course, Mynine's vast army was now completely surrounded. When Angto came thundering down on the rear, its fate was sealed. It did not have the ghost of a show now. The rest was massacre. It was a slaughter, a butcher, a horror unutterable, a hell on earth. The blood ran into that river in streams. I saw it. It coursed down the banks of that river in streams.

For Mynine's warriors were packed together so closely that they could not use their weapons—went down indeed like the grass before the sickle.

And for seven long hours that butchering went on. When all was over, one hundred and twenty thousand insurrectionists lay dead or wounded on that awful field, and twenty thousand were prisoners. Draconda's loss was very small—a little over twelve thousand men, dead and wounded.

The body of poor Nytes was found—headless, crushed and hoof-mangled.

The sun was shining brightly when the battle began, but the clouds increased in number and volume; and, about noon, the sun, which for some time had been shining but fitfully, went out altogether, sending a heavy gloom down upon the awful field. Then a wind sprang up and slowly grew stronger, at last sweeping across the field in sudden and wrathful gusts. The sky threatened rain. And, as the end was drawing near, the heavens in the west parted of a sudden, and, for several minutes only, the sun sent yellow and bloody rays down upon the terrible place, when it disappeared to shine no more than day.

At length Draconda gave an order that Mynine be brought before her.

Henry gave me a troubled look, but he said nothing either to Draconda or to me.

In a few minutes, the captive was standing before the queen, who was mounted.

Mynine had not received even so much as a scratch. She wore a coat of golden mail, and upon her head was a stephane, studded with precious stones.

She courtesied to the queen with a smile on her pale lips, when she stood erect and looked fixedly into Draconda's eyes. She was very pale, but she did not tremble at all: at any rate, I could not detect the least tremor in the slender frame—which housed that terrible thing of her called a soul, that thing which had brought down upon this Venusian nation so much turmoil, sorrow, blood and destruction.

"So, my Mynine," said Draconda in her softest tones, "we meet again, and it is I that have the honor of holding *thee* captive. Perchance thou didst anger the gods, my Mynine. And now tell me this: what hast thou to say?"

Mynine said never a word, though her wide blue eyes spoke volumes.

The wind was sweeping across the plain in a stronger gust than common, and, as Draconda spoke the last words, the first drops of that rain which the dark skies had long portended came driving down, stinging like hailstones.

Draconda drew her sword.

"Now shalt thou die, my Mynine," she said evenly. "I shall slay thee now, even as thou didst slay my sister."

Mynine laughed.

"So be it, O queen. You win. Perchance, though, in some other world, we shall meet again."

"Mayhap, my Mynine. And mayhap we have met before."

"Good heavens, Draconda!" cried Henry Quainfan, standing aghast, "what are you going to do—kill her?"

"Kill her," was the quiet response. "Kill her, even as she killed my Nytes—smite off her head to the earth."

He gave an exclamation of horror.

"Vengeance, Draconda—"

"I am going to kill me that woman," she interrupted him, a steely ring in her tones. "Just now I am Themis. What! Would you, if in my place, set her free, strew her pathway with roses?"

"Not that. But—"

"Justice is justice," she interrupted again: "it matters not whose the hand that delivers the stroke."

She ordered Mynine blindfolded and her hands tied behind her. This was done speedily and in utter silence.

Henry begged Draconda not to do this thing, and to his entreaties my own were added; but the queen was not to be moved an inch in her determination.

"If you kill her, Draconda," exclaimed Henry Quainfan at last, pale with anger and helplessness, "then I'll go away! For I won't—no, I won't marry a murderess!"

"A murderess!" echoed Draconda, looking at her lover curiously. "Don't be foolish, my Henry. Remember that just now I am Themis."

Suddenly a hard, steely light—one that for an instant was actually terrible—shot into the queen's dark eyes.

"This girl believes, my Henry, that you loved her—really and truly loved her—until you saw me. And, after all,

what woman really knows the heart of her lover? Yes, perhaps memory stings—and you have good reason to ask it!"

He stood silent.

"However, I am going to kill that woman. And you will not take me to wife if I do?"

Still he did not speak.

Draconda laughed.

At a sign from her, the men drew back from Mynine, who was standing straight and still. Not the slightest tremor was perceptible, though her cheeks were as pale as Death's own. A curious smile, though—one that often rises before my eyes and lingers there—hovered about her lips.

Draconda raised her weapon, rode toward Mynine and smote off Mynine's head, which rolled over twice or thrice, opened and shut its blue eyes several times, then stared straight at Henry Quainfan through the driving rain.

The queen wheeled her horse round and in a moment had dismounted before her lover. She said nothing, just looked at him. And he stepped to her, put his right arm around her and drew her close. And, clinging to him tightly, she cried a little.

AND here I may well bring this narrative to a close. The day before Mynine's great army met destruction, his pontifical highness was killed by a priest in a drunken fight; this occurred in Seeamnos, and shows that, though delighting in intrigue and turmoil, Sallysherib took good care to keep his sacred person distant from the scene of action. Peace followed the great battle. Draconda was able to abolish human sacrifices and many other things of that order—the reform being facilitated by the cruel oppression the people long had endured from the hands of the priests. However, the gravest problem in Loom today is, in all likelihood, this one of the sacerdotal caste. Draconda and Henry Quainfan (who is the king now and called King Henry) are going to direct all possible energy toward the final dissolution of its pernicious influence.

Henry has just begun work on a wireless apparatus (though, of course, he is sadly hampered) with which he hopes to speak the earth. He is sure it is possible to enter into communication with our mother planet and is jubilant over the thought of it.

So this story of Draconda will be read by Terrestrials after all! What a surprise Mr. Homer L. Wood will receive when Henry Quainfan's voice comes to him from out the void!

Neither Draconda nor Henry has seen a page of the record, I withholding it for reasons that will be sufficiently obvious. Of course, that part of it, and the many notes, necessary for its complete understanding by the Venusians will not be transmitted—at any rate, I suppose Henry will not transmit that part of the text and those many notes.

In a few moments, the last word of this history will have been penned. And I am going away now—with a single companion, whose name is Reem Gomar. Though the good things of life are accessible to him, yet he is going away with me—to what, we can only dream.

The great sun is just setting: I wonder in what far places Gomar and I shall see it go down in the west. Of course, neither Draconda nor Henry knows that we are going—we only know.

I have been writing for a long time now, and my hand is tired, and my mind is tired, and so I shall say good-bye. Perhaps—who knows?—many years lie before me and one day I shall even take up my pen to write another history of marvelous things and happenings.

Until then, farewell.

CHAPTER FORTY-SIX

BY THE HAND OF HIS COMRADE

HERE Rider Farnermain's manuscript ends. Of course, Henry Quainfan succeeded in making an apparatus with which he could send electromagnetic waves to our earth—else your eye never would have lighted on this story of Draconda.

The first message was received by me (Homer L. Wood) on the tenth day of May at about a quarter past nine in the evening; and I succeeded, with the instrument that Mr. Quainfan gave me shortly before his mysterious disappearance (and which Mr. Farnermain forgot to mention) in soon getting an answer to him. Then came explanations, which I need not give here, and almost immediately was begun the transmission of this marvelous history—now all ready to be given to the world; the most extraordinary true narrative, I believe, ever penned by mortal hand.

"I have omitted," says Mr. Quainfan, "certain lines in which Rider speaks of me in unmerited terms, though, of course, this was not done without his permission. Otherwise certainly I should not have done so. Even as it is, some passages make me to blush like the rose of Sharon. In other respects, however, Rider's narrative (save, of course, that part of the text, and those many notes, written for the benefit of the Venusians) has been transmitted to you just as written. Nothing pertaining to Draconda has been omitted, though Rider extended to her the favor of making any deletion that might be desired: however, not even a comma was struck from the record by her hand.

"Often do we, Draconda and I, sit in the stillness of the night (in which no moon ever shines) and gaze with indescribable feelings at those two stars, the one much larger than the other, that we know so well—the earth and the moon. When they are in opposition, and for some time before and after, the disk of the earth is distinctly visible, and Terra is then a lovely object indeed in our Venusian skies. Mercury too blazes out nobly, now evening star, now star of morn. But oh, how I long for the silvery light of the moon!

"And how interesting now will be the beautiful star Hesperus and Lucifer to eyes on the earth, now when it is known that this shining world, too, is the abode of men and women; that here also, in this far-distant world, which in its remoteness seems but a shining point, are love and hate, laughter and tears, ecstasy, death and sorrow—that great brooding shrouded thing that men, under various names, know as the Mystery of Being.

"As for Rider, not a single word has ever come to us from him or about him. Every day I hope that the long silence will be broken, and never a messenger arrives but the hope rises in my heart that at last word has come to me, but it is only to sink again into those troubled depths whence it comes.

"Does he still see those two stars upon which we so often gaze, or has darkness closed his eyelids in that sleep which men call death?

"Only time can answer, and perhaps even from it no answer ever will come.

"But I still hope: some time, if he is still living and goes not down to death, he will send word to me—some time will come to me again. Yes, surely there will come a day when he will long to see me as I do him and grasp his hand in mine once more.

"Peradventure, though, he will circle the planet ere he comes to us again.

"And now, to all who have known us, to every man, woman and child on the whole earth, Draconda and I send our best greetings and best wishes—send them silently throbbing across that terrible, unfathomable abyss which I shall never cross again."

So now the curtain descends, the drama is done.

And, as the great discoverer and his wondrous queen sit in the stillness of the night and gaze at those two stars that are Terra and Selene, so do I sit and gaze away at that lovely orb which now hangs in our western sky at eve like some glorious jewel; and thousands of pictures come and go in my eyes, and I wonder if Rider Farnermain still lives somewhere in that shining vastness which is to us but a point of light—if ever again his voice, as it were, will wing its swift and silent way across that everchanging, bottomless abyss that lies between.

THE END

A Wild and Terrifying Adventure, but It All Happened in a Hotel Room

THE HAND

By H. FRANCIS CASKEY

THE KEY fitted the door perfectly, so there was nothing to warn me I was mistaken in entering the hotel room I supposed was my own. I know not what mental lapse caused me to mistake my floor. It was presumably, a bit of absent-mindedness for my mind was full of the details of a business meeting just over in the Auditorium. I had delivered the address of the evening, and, like most amateur speakers, was revolving in my thoughts the things I had said and the many others I had inadvertently left unsaid. This room, into which I mistakenly made my entrance, was, as I discovered later, directly beneath my own. The sight that met my astounded gaze as I opened the door held me motionless in a paralysis of surprise.

The unbelievable thing I saw before me was too astonishing, too weird, too utterly monstrous for credence. It was like a horrible replica of some fantastic dream such as visits those who have sought their sleep with over-burdened stomach or troubled mind.

How many of us have waked from uneasy slumber with some terrifying unimaginable picture of stark terror seared for a moment on the retina of our eyes by the unfathomable magic of unconsciousness! How grateful we have been for the mysterious workings of nature which, with our complete awakening, erase these ghastly fantasies from memory's gallery!

Before me—facing me, in fact—from a chair on the farther side of the small table such as are common to all hotel rooms, sat a huge man whose gaze for a moment held my own. A dominating man, this, whose well-trimmed Van Dyke beard lent a professional aspect to features strong and severe as those of any ancient Roman Emperor. He bulked large behind the table like some great figure of Buddha, impressive and awe-inspiring in its quiet forcefulness. He

was coatless, and his immaculate sleeves were turned back to the elbows on two powerful arms. The burning eyes that held my own seemed charged with actual physical force, some super-animal magnetism. My glance wavered to the bed, where his coat, carelessly tossed, assumed to my amazed vision the well-defined outlines of some hideous couchant animal, stark against the whiteness of the linen.

But that which held me spellbound, seeming by its horrible actuality to freeze the blood within me, inhibiting my powers of speech and motion, lay on the table, white in the brilliant light, clean and snowy, and, were it not for the ghastly story it told, even alluring.

I gasped, "Great God! I am dreaming!"

A low laugh, softly modulated, yet carrying conviction of sincere amusement, brought my startled gaze to the other end of the table. A girl sat there, a girl whose beauty beggars my powers of description, though I recall her every feature with a clarity of remembrance that will go with me to the grave. Faultless she was, in clear pure beauty that allows me no play of words on any feature that contributed to her loveliness. Hair of magic gold that glistened with inviting temptation to the touch; azure eyes, surpassing in their wondrous beauty Nature's own painting of the eternal skies; skin that gleamed like ivory-porcelain on neck and shoulders that would be models for some sculptor's everlasting fame. A fairy-woman, yet real enough as she smiled at me in unaffected mirth.

For the first time I became aware of two other occupants of the room—two men who sat at the other end of the table, slightly in the rear of the big man opposite me. My first horror-stricken gaze had so centered on what lay on the shining blood-red mahogany table that I had failed to notice them. Both were dressed and groomed with exceeding care. Both were likewise of professional aspect, and neither seemed moved by any emotion other than mild amusement at what must have been my grotesque, frozen attitude.

The calm matter-of-factness of these four people, and the smile on the face of the beautiful girl, terrified me with the fear my mind was leaving me. It was all too revolting, too ghoulish, too sickening for credence except to a dethroned reason.

On the gleaming, polished wood of the table, in almost the exact center, within reach of any of the four who sat about it, lay—My God! can I ever forget it?—a woman's hand!

A woman's hand!

Cleanly severed at the wrist, a flashing diamond sparkling from the platinum mounting on the third finger, each well-kept nail gleaming pinkly in mute testimonial of much studied care, it was a grisly exhibit well calculated to stun the mind of any normal witness. My knees sagged and I dropped unbidden into a chair.

A woman's hand!

Do you not see why it was that my soul grew ill and I doubted my own sanity? Have you thought, perhaps, that mine must be a lightly balanced, hysterical temperament that I should so easily grow horror-stricken over what was so surely but an anatomical specimen, on display before these evidently scientific gentlemen for some legitimate purpose? A woman's hand! Surely this was not the first time such an object had served the purposes of science.

True—all of it true—but never such a hand as that at which I stared. Never such a hand, plump, unshriveled and pink with glowing life as was this. Never such a hand, so cleanly amputated *with never the loss of a single drop of blood.* Never a victim of so horrible a loss as she who smilingly raised a rounded wrist from which the hand was missing.

Was it a dream? No! Except for a numbed horror, I was never more fully awake. The sound of the elevator reached me as its doors slammed on some distant floor. From the street came the roar of passing street cars, and the occasional blast of a motor horn. No, it was not a dream! Would to God it were, that time might erase the sleep-destroying memory from my brain.

Unnerved, weakened, sickened, I sat and stared in unbelieving fascination at the huge man who held my gaze and on whose face a slow smile began to creep. The sight I have just described had taken but the briefest moment to stamp itself upon my consciousness, and his easy gesture of casual welcome seemed to follow immediately upon my entrance into the room. None of those present seemed surprised or alarmed at my intrusion, and he who dominated the small assembly now spoke in a quiet, assured voice that reached me with all the emphasis of a command.

"You are just in time, Mr. Ferrell, to witness a revolutionary performance in modern surgery."

He held up a peculiar S-shaped tube in which a greenish liquid seemed to move sullenly.

"This preparation is the most complete and marvelous anesthetic ever dreamed of. Applied externally, it instantly kills every nerve, halts every drop of blood, so that an amputation may be performed under the eyes of the patient with never a sense of pain nor feeling. Applied immediately afterwards to the wound, it seals it hygienically and almost immediately transforms itself into skin, so that any operation may be performed and recovery assured within an hour. As a matter of fact," (he waved his hand negligently toward the grisly thing on the table) "that extremity was removed only five minutes before you came."

I stared in speechless wonder at the girl, who again raised the severed wrist for my inspection. The stump was as though nature had planned a perfect woman but stopped short of perfection by failing to endow her with a hand. The skin seemed to grow smoothly around the end of the wrist. I could discern no evidences of recent surgical treatment. From the other end of the table one of the men spoke.

"Perhaps Mr. Ferrell would care to make a closer examination of the subject before witnessing the next operation."

I shrank back in my chair, my voice squeaking with excitement as I shrilled, "Another operation? My God, no! I will not be a witness to such monstrous malpractice."

Yet in my soul I knew I could not move from where I sat. Some unseen force gripped my heart. Its horrible restraining fingers held me inert in this charnel house of infamous trickery.

The big man spoke smoothly, ignoring my protest as if my voice had failed to reach him.

"Mr. Ferrell, being a layman, would doubtless prefer to remain seated, where he can witness what is done, unaffected so far as possible by his obviously morbid imagination."

The others nodded their agreement, and he turned to the girl, who moved closer to the table with apparently fanatical interest. Her gruesome efforts to use the hand, once a part of her beautiful body, and the fumbling ineffectiveness of the pitiful stump, brought a curse to my lips, but the callous heartlessness of the others seemed unaffected. The big man spoke.

"Freda, your consent to this operation, which is to some extent a mutilation of your physical charms, is most gratifying, but I have decided the second operation need not affect your appearance. You are not suffering any effects from the loss of your hand?"

The girl, Freda, as he called her, smiled reassuringly. "None whatever,

Dr. Menostique. As yet I have not even missed it."

I shrank back in my chair. My reason rebelled against the things my eyes and my hearing were telling me. What mysterious power was this in which the terrible doctor held this beautiful girl? With my own sight I had beheld her piteous fumblings with the wrist as she had moved closer to the table. What prompted her colossal untruth? I forced myself to speak, but the same horrible clutching fingers seemed to forbid my rising.

"This is a hoax," I croaked, my voice strange and unrecognizable in my own ears, "What are you trying to do? What monstrous trick are you playing with me?"

Again the big man seemed not to hear me. His eyes were upon the girl, and the two at the end of the table leaned forward interestedly as he slowly withdrew a platinum-like stopper from the end of his peculiarly shaped retort. From a case which I had failed to notice, but which must have been on the table during all the time I had been in this awful room, he took several shining instruments which I recognized as surgical scalpels and knives. They fascinated me with their bright, sinister immaculateness.

Dr. Menostique turned again to the girl.

"It will be necessary to turn your chair, Freda, so your head will lie on its back, directly under this light. You are not afraid? The removal of an eye will take but half the time involved in the amputation of the hand. I have the artificial eye in readiness."

Her eye! They were going to remove her eye!

Again the girl smiled without a trace of fear.

"I am glad to submit to these operations in the cause of science," she said. The two men at the end of the table nodded owlishly in agreement. They arose, as if actuated by a single brain, and walked to the other end of the table, passing me noiselessly, intent on assisting in the proper placement of the chair.

The girl, Freda, likewise arose, and the two turned her chair so that its back was against the end of the table, directly under the cluster of lights that illumined the room. The doctor casually arranged his instruments and the tube.

My soul struggled for the release of my body, but I was powerless to move. The huge man placed his instruments more carefully. The fearsome hand, still rosy in the white light, he shoved carelessly to one side, much as one might brush aside an unwanted pencil in absent-minded indifference. My mind revolted at this sickening display of casual indecency. The hand trembled on the edge of the table, and while I eyed it in horrible fascination, dropped upon the floor at my feet. The doctor looked up and evinced neither surprise nor regret at the gruesome incident. He stretched forth his hand, making the request with nonchalant politeness.

"The specimen," he said smilingly, "there by your foot. Please hand it to me."

Some power beyond my own bent me to his request. For a moment I could not, and then, because it seemed I must, I picked the thing up. With a groan I dropped it instantly. Like some horrid revelation it came to me that I must be insane. The elevator clanged in its shaft and the street cars roared far below, while the constant screech of automobile sirens came plainly and clearly to my ears, but I was mad. I must be mad! Somewhere, somehow, my reason must have left me to become a whimpering scrapegoat for ghoulish fancies.

For the hand was warm to my touch! Was I not mad? Was my mind not a shattered remnant of normality to imagine that this hand, this poor dead witness to an infamous quackery, carried within it for these many minutes since it had left the body of its mistreated owner the pulsating warmth of life? I shrank in utter terror.

But the quiet, commanding voice of the doctor reached me.

"Quick, please! We are ready for the second operation."

The awfulness of that command! My God! the compelling awfulness of it. I had no choice. With racing heart and whirling brain I forced myself to hand the sickening object to him. He received it carelessly, and placed it with scarcely a look on the table before him. My soul shuddered with the consciousness of a profanation. I longed to flee from the room and all its horrid occupants, but the power of motion seemed to have left me. My eyes again followed the purposeful movements of the doctor. He was adjusting the table and carefully measuring the distance from it to the chair. The girl, Freda, stood waiting.

Finally everything seemed to be to the big man's liking. With never a glance at me or his colleagues, he motioned smilingly to Freda, who immediately took her place in the chair. Her uncanny willingness to submit to so unheard of an operation smacked in itself of insanity, yet her bearing and calm, untroubled eyes—those beautiful eyes, one of which was to be an offering to this inhuman god of chicanery—told all too clearly of her perfect awareness of what she was about to do. I strove to cry out, to call to the world some warning of what was about to happen—what had already happened in that seemingly innocent hotel room, but though I tried mightily, no sound escaped my lips, nor did my manifest endeavors register upon any of the four who occupied it with me. Even now, on the morning following, I can recall with fearful vividness how frantic was my vain effort to shout.

And then, while horror held me paralyzed, the doctor, with shining scalpel in hand, nodded to one of the men to apply the greenish transparent liquid that moved curiously in the queer S-shaped tube.

The strange leaden motion that seemed to originate in the liquid was a terrifying manifestation of unreality. It did not boil; it did not bubble. Rather it seemed to oscillate within itself in a heavy oily manner, a satanic disturbance which affected me strangely. A vision of the infernal one seemed to come between me and the tube as I watched, and the idea struck me as singularly appropriate, since only the devil himself could conjure in so mind-twisting a fashion.

A strange fancy took hold of me. I was no more a mortal. In some mysterious manner I seemed to have passed on, and was now in the inferno. These things I was witnessing must be a part of the everlasting tortures I was to suffer in these lower regions. I writhed, but could not escape.

The S-shaped tube disappeared. For a moment I thought it had vanished into thin air, and then I saw the man to whom the doctor had nodded lift it from the table. With a tiny cotton-tipped rod he was about to apply it to the eye of the girl, who, with head thrown back over the chair, where the strong lights revealed her pure startling beauty, waited with patient unconcern.

Then for an instant my sight seemed to fail me. When I saw again, the man was setting the S-shaped tube back upon the table. The liquid was dull and strangely still. Only a small portion of it remained. The doctor spoke.

"Quiet, please."

Before my unbelieving eyes (I had not really felt within my soul that such a thing could happen) the big man calmly ran the scalpel under the eye of the girl, who neither winced nor gave any other manifestation of concern. No drop of blood flowed! *Great God! Not one drop of blood!*

Some untapped power within me gave me strength to spring from my chair. Powerless was I to speak, but I found myself on my feet, and in a frenzy of

fear I fled from the room. Even in the going I thought it strange that no one made to stop me, and I ran down the hallway as one possessed, fear of the unseen hard upon my heels. In a moment, during which I must have taken the single flight of steps at a bound, I found myself in my own room on the floor above. Familiar things were about me. My traveling-bag, overcoat, clothing, each easily recognized object, seemed a kindly rescuing hand, thrust forth to succor me from the awfulness of what had passed. With a sob I sank upon the bed and consciousness left me.

I awoke with the noon-day light streaming through the window. For a moment, such was the startling clarity with which the events of the preceding night came back to me, I thought it must have all been some hideous dream. I was still fully dressed, but possessed of a physical weariness that vouched in itself for a drain upon my mental energy. Clearly I recalled every step of the evening before: my supper, the business meeting at which I had spoken, its breaking up, the casual conversations that had their part in the adjournment, the handshakes of those who were leaving the city, my own final leavetaking before starting to retire. Each detail stood forth clearly in my mind, and moved with logical sequence to the horrifying things I had by accident witnessed. I even recalled the fear and terror with which I had escaped from the room below. Even now, with the wholesome sunlight streaming into the room, I shuddered with remembrance. I looked at my watch. Stopped! I had not wound it. No, the whole thing had happened. A sudden impulse, overmastering in its forcefulness, impelled me to write of the things I saw.

And so I have written. I have set down all that happened, exactly as it did happen. No fault of memory has permitted the escape of any trifle. All of it is still clear in my brain . . . and I am hungry.

I am back in my room after a hearty luncheon, which I thoroughly enjoyed. The desk clerk eyed me strangely when I asked, off-handedly as I thought, who had occupied the room directly under mine during the night.

"Dr. Menostique and his wife," he said, and added, with a curious look at me, "and his assistant. I think they were in the room until about midnight. They all checked out this morning."

The name, though familiar enough to me as that of the man who had been the leader in the sickening drama of the night, meant nothing else.

"Dr. Menostique?" I asked. "Who is Dr. Menostique?"

The clerk was obviously bored and seemingly distrustful of my lack of knowledge of one who was apparently a celebrity. He eyed me pityingly.

"Dr. Menostique is the shark's shanks at this hypnotism thing," he said. "Nutty bimbo. Likes to put the spell on strangers and make 'em see snakes, or something. Rotten trick to pull on a man, but the guys that he work on never seem to mind it I understand."

Hypnotized? I do not know. I think I shall never know. It does not seem possible. Everything was too clear, too plainly convincing. The worldly wise clerk passed a final opinion.

"They say what that fellow can make a man see is plain hell. Hope he never picks on me. I'd rather take my chances on waiting."

And I.

The Original Bluebeard

AS this extraordinary personage has long been the theme not only of children's early study and terror, and as no afterpiece ever had a greater run than that splendid and popular musician entertainment which bears the name of Bluebeard, the following is the character of that being who really existed and who was distinguished in horror and derision by that appellation.

He was the famous Gilles, Marquis de Savals, a Marshal of France, and a general of uncommon intrepidity, and greatly distinguished himself in the reigns of Charles VI. and VII. by his courage, particularly against the English when they invaded France. He rendered those services to his country which were sufficient to immortalize his name, had he not for ever tarnished his glory by the most horrible and cruel murders, blasphemies and licentiousness of every kind. His revenues were princely, but his prodigality was sufficient to render an emperor a bankrupt. Wherever he went he had in his suite a seraglio, a company of players, a band of musicians, a society of sorcerers, an almost incredible number of cooks, packs of dogs of various kinds, and above 200 led horses.

Mezerai, an author of the highest repute, says that he encouraged and maintained men who called themselves sorcerers, to discover hidden treasures, and corrupted young persons of both sexes to attach themselves to him for the sake of their blood, which was requisite to form his charms and incantations. These horrid excesses may be believed when we reflect on the age of ignorance and barbarity in which they were certainly but too often practiced. He was at length, for a state crime against the Duke of Brittany, sentenced to be burnt alive in a field at Nantes, A. D. 1440, but the Duke of Brittany, who was present at his execution, so far mitigated the sentence, that he was first strangled, then burnt, and his ashes buried. Though he was descended from one of the most illustrious families in France, he declared previous to his death, that all his horrid excesses were owing to his wretched education.

The Loved Dead

By C. M. EDDY, JR.

IT IS midnight. Before dawn they will find me and take me to a black cell where I shall languish interminably, while insatiable desires gnaw at my vitals and wither up my heart, till at last I become one with the dead that I love.

My seat is the foetid hollow of an aged grave; my desk is the back of a fallen tombstone worn smooth by devastating centuries; my only light is that of the stars and a thin-edged moon, yet I can see as clearly as though it were mid-day. Around me on every side, sepulchral sentinels guarding unkempt graves, the tilting, decrepit headstones lie half-hidden in masses of nauseous, rotting vegetation. Above the rest, silhouetted against the livid sky, an august monument lifts its austere, tapering spire like the spectral chieftain of a lemurian horde. The air is heavy with the noxious odors of fungi and the scent of damp, mouldy earth, but to me it is the aroma of Elysium. It is still—terrifyingly still—with a silence whose very profundity bespeaks the solemn and the hideous. Could I choose my habitation it would be in the heart of some such city of putrefying flesh and crumbling bones; for their nearness sends ecstatic thrills through my soul, causing the stagnant blood to race through my veins and my torpid heart to pound with delirious joy—for the presence of death is life to me!

My early childhood was one long, prosaic and monotonous apathy. Strictly ascetic, wan, pallid, undersized and subject to protracted spells of morbid moroseness, I was ostracised by the healthy, normal youngsters of my own age. They dubbed me a spoil-sport, an "old woman," because I had no interest in the rough, childish games they played, or any stamina to participate in them, had I so desired.

Like all rural villages, Fenham had its quota of poison-tongued gossips. Their prying imaginations hailed my lethargic temperament as some abhorrent abnormality; they compared me with my parents and shook their heads in ominous doubt at the vast difference. Some of the more superstitious openly pronounced me a changeling while others who knew something of my ancestry called attention to the vague mysterious rumors concerning a great-great-grand uncle who had been burned at the stake as a necromancer.

Had I lived in some larger town, with greater opportunities for congenial companionship, perhaps I could have overcome this early tendency to be a recluse. As I reached my teens I grew even more sullen, morbid, and apathetic. My life lacked motivation. I seemed in the grip of something that dulled my senses, stunted my development, retarded my activities, and left me unaccountably dissatisfied.

I was sixteen when I attended my first funeral. A funeral in Fenham was a pre-eminent social event, for our town was noted for the longevity of its inhabitants. When, moreover, the funeral was that of such a well-known character as my grandfather, it was safe to assume that the townspeople would turn out en masse to pay due homage to his memory. Yet I did not view the approaching ceremony with even latent interest. Anything that tended to lift me out of my habitual inertia held for me only the promise of physical and mental disquietude. In deference to my parents' importunings, mainly to give myself relief from their caustic condemnations of what they chose to call my unfilial attitude, I agreed to accompany them.

THERE was nothing out of the ordinary about my grandfather's funeral unless it was the voluminous array of floral tributes; but this, remember, was my initiation to the solemn rites of such an occasion. Something about the darkened room, the oblong coffin with its somber drapings, the banked masses of fragrant blooms, the dolorous manifestations of the assembled villagers, stirred me from my normal listlessness and arrested my attention. Roused from my momentary reverie by a nudge from my mother's sharp elbow, I followed her across the room to the casket where the body of my grandparent laid.

For the first time I was face to face with Death. I looked down upon the calm placid face lined with its multitudinous wrinkles, and saw nothing to cause so much of sorrow. Instead, it seemed to me that grandfather was immeasurably content, blandly satisfied. I felt swayed by some strange discordant sense of elation. So slowly, so stealthily had it crept over me, that I could scarcely define its coming. As I mentally review that portentous hour it seems that it must have originated with my first glimpse of that funeral scene, silently strengthening its grip with a subtle insidiousness. A baleful malignant influence that seemed to emanate from the corpse itself held me with magnetic fascination. My whole being seemed charged with some ecstatic electrifying force, and I felt my form straighten without conscious volition. My eyes were trying to burn beneath the closed lids of the dead man's and read some secret message they concealed. My heart gave a sudden leap of unholy glee, and pounded against my ribs with demoniacal force as if to free itself from the confining walls of my frail frame. Wild, wanton, soul-satisfying sensuality engulfed me. Once more the vigorous prod of a maternal elbow jarred me into activity. I had made my way to the sable-shrouded coffin with leaden tread; I walked away with newfound animation.

I accompanied the cortege to the cemetery, my whole physical being permeated with this mystic enlivening influence. It was as if I had quaffed deep draughts of some exoteric elixir—some abominable concoction brewed from blasphemous formulae in the archives of Belial.

The townsfolk were so intent upon the ceremony that the radical change in my demeanor passed unnoticed by all save my father and my mother, but in the fortnight that followed, the village busybodies found fresh material for their vitriolic tongues in my altered bearing. At the end of the fortnight, however, the potency of the stimulus began to lose its effectiveness. Another day or two and I had completely reverted to my old-time langour, though not to the complete and engulfing insipidity of the past. Before, there had been an utter lack of desire to emerge from the enervation; now vague and indefinable unrest disturbed me. Outwardly I had become myself again, and the scandal-mongers turned to some more engrossing subject. Had they even so much as dreamed the true cause of my exhilaration they would have shunned

me as if I were a filthy, leprous thing. Had I visioned the execrable power behind my brief period of elation I would have locked myself forever from the rest of the world and spent my remaining years in penitent solitude.

TRAGEDY often runs in trilogies, hence despite the proverbial longevity of our townspeople the next five years brought the death of both parents. My mother went first, in an accident of the most unexpected nature; and so genuine was my grief that I was honestly surprised to find its poignancy mocked and contradicted by that almost forgotten feeling of supreme and diabolical ecstasy. Once more my heart leaped wildly within me, once more it pounded at trip-hammer speed and sent the hot blood coursing through my veins with meteoric fervor. I shook from my shoulders the harassing cloak of stagnation only to replace it with the infinitely more horrible burden of loathsome, unhallowed desire. I haunted the death-chamber where the body of my mother lay, my soul athirst for the devilish nectar that seemed to saturate the air of the darkened room. Every breath strengthened me, lifted me to towering heights of seraphic satisfaction. I knew, now, that it was but a sort of drugged delirium which must soon pass and leave me correspondingly weakened by its malign power, yet I could no more control my longing than I could untwist the Gordian knots in the already tangled skein of my destiny.

I knew, too, that through some strange satanic curse my life depended upon the dead for its motive force; that there was a singularity in my makeup which responded only to the awesome presence of some lifeless clod. A few days later, frantic for the bestial intoxicant on which the fullness of my existence depended, I interviewed Fenham's sole undertaker and talked him into taking me on as a sort of apprentice.

The shock of my mother's demise had visibly affected my father. I think that if I had broached the idea of such *outre* employment at any other time he would have been emphatic in his refusal. As it was he nodded acquiescence after a moment's sober thought. How little did I dream that he would be the object of my first practical lesson!

He, too, died suddenly; developing some hither-to unsuspected heart affliction. My octogenarian employer tried his best to dissuade me from the unthinkable task of embalming his body, nor did he detect the rapturous glint in my eyes as I finally won him over to my damnable point of view. I cannot hope to express the reprehensible, the unutterable thoughts that swept in tumultuous waves of passion through my racing heart as I labored over the lifeless clay. Unsurpassable love was the keynote of these concepts, a love greater—far greater—than any I had ever borne him while he was alive.

My father was not a rich man, but he had possessed enough of worldly goods to make him comfortably independent. As his sole heir I found myself in rather a paradoxical position. My early youth had totally failed to fit me for contact with the modern world, yet the primitive life of Fenham with its attendant isolation palled upon me. Indeed, the longevity of the inhabitants defeated my sole motive in arranging my indenture.

After settling the estate it proved an easy matter to secure my release and I headed for Bayboro, a city some fifty miles away.

Here my year of apprenticeship stood me in good stead. I had no trouble in establishing a favorable connection as an assistant with the Gresham Corporation, a concern that maintained the largest funeral parlors in the city. I even prevailed upon them to let me sleep upon the premises—for already the proximity of the dead was becoming an obsession.

I applied myself to my task with unwonted zeal. No case was too gruesome for my impious sensibilities, and I soon became master at my chosen vocation. Every fresh corpse brought into the establishment meant a fulfilled promise of ungodly gladness, of irreverent gratification; a return of that rapturous tumult of the arteries which transformed my grisly task into one of beloved devotion—yet every such carnal satiation exacted its toll. I came to dread the days that brought no dead for me to gloat over, and prayed to all the obscene gods of the nethermost abysses to bring swift, sure death upon the residents of the city.

THEN came the nights when a skulking figure stole surreptitiously through the shadowy streets of the suburbs; pitch-dark nights when the midnight moon was obscured by heavy lowering clouds. It was a furtive figure that blended with the trees and cast fugitive glances over its shoulder; a figure bent on some malignant mission. After one of those prowlings the morning papers would scream to their sensation-mad clientele the details of some nightmare crime; column on column of lurid gloating over abominable atrocities; paragraph on paragraph of impossible solutions and extravagant, conflicting suspicions. Through it all I felt a supreme sense of security, for who would for a moment suspect an employe in an undertaking establishment, where Death was supposedly an every-day affair, of seeking surcease from unnamable urgings in the cold-blooded slaughter of his fellow-beings? I planned each crime with maniacal cunning, varying the manner of my murders so that no one would even dream that all were the work of one blood-stained pair of hands. The aftermath of each nocturnal venture was an ecstatic hour of pleasure, pernicious and unalloyed; a pleasure always heightened by the chance that its delicious source might later be assigned to my gloating administrations in the course of my regular occupation. Sometimes that double and ultimate pleasure did occur—O rare and delicious memory!

During long nights when I clung close to the shelter of my sanctuary, I was prompted by the mausoleum silence to devise new and unspeakable ways of lavishing my affections upon the dead that I loved—the dead that gave me life!

One morning Mr. Gresham came much earlier than usual—came to find me stretched out upon a cold slab deep in ghoulish slumber, my arms wrapped about the stark, stiff, naked body of a fetid corpse! He roused me from my salacious dreams, his eyes filled with mingled detestation and pity. Gently but firmly he told me that I must go, that my nerves were unstrung, that I needed a long rest from the repellent tasks my vocation required, that my impressionable youth was too deeply affected by the dismal atmosphere of my environment. How little did he know of the demoniacal desires that spurred me on in my disgusting infirmities! I was wise enough to see that argument would only strengthen his belief in my potential madness—it was far better to leave than to invite discovery of the motive underlying my actions.

After this I dared not stay long in one place for fear some overt act would bare my secret to an unsympathetic world. I drifted from city to city, from town to town. I worked in morgues, around cemeteries, once in a crematory—anywhere that afforded me an opportunity to be near the dead that I so craved.

Then came the world war. I was one of the first to go across, one of the last to return. Four years of blood-red charnel Hell . . . sickening slime of rain-rotten trenches . . . deafening bursting of hysterical shells . . . monotonous droning of sardonic bullets . . . smoking frenzies of Phlegethon's fountains . . . stifling fumes of murderous gases . . . grotesque remnants of smashed and

shredded bodies . . . four years of transcendent satisfaction.

In every wanderer there is a latent urge to return to the scenes of his childhood. A few months later found me making my way through the familiar byways of Fenham. Vacant dilapidated farm houses lined the adjacent roadsides, while the years had brought equal retrogression to the town itself. A mere handful of the houses were occupied, but among these was the one I had once called home. The tangled, weed-choked driveway, the broken window panes, the uncared-for acres that stretched behind, all bore mute confirmation of the tales that guarded inquiries had elicited—that it now sheltered a dissolute drunkard who eked out a meager existence from the chores his few neighbors gave him out of sympathy for the mistreated wife and undernourished child who shared his lot. All in all, the glamour surrounding my youthful environment was entirely dispelled; so, prompted by some errant foolhardy thought, I next turned my steps toward Bayboro.

HERE, too, the years had brought changes, but in reverse order. The small city I remembered had almost doubled in size despite its wartime depopulation. Instinctively I sought my former place of employment, finding it still there but with an unfamiliar name and "Successor to" above the door, for the influenza epidemic had claimed Mr. Gresham, while the boys were overseas. Some fateful mood impelled me to ask for work. I referred to my tutelage under Mr. Gresham with some trepidation, but my fears were groundless—my late employer had carried the secret of my unethical conduct with him to the grave. An opportune vacancy insured my immediate re-installation.

Then came vagrant haunting memories of scarlet nights of impious pilgrimages, and an uncontrollable desire to renew those illicit joys. I cast caution to the winds and launched upon another series of damnable debaucheries. Once more the yellow sheets found welcome material in the devilish details of my crimes, comparing them to the red weeks of horror that had appalled the city years before. Once more the police sent out their dragnet and drew into its enmeshing folds—nothing!

My thirst for the noxious nectar of the dead grew to a consuming fire, and I began to shorten the periods between my odious exploits. I realized that I was treading on dangerous ground, but demoniac desire gripped me in its torturing tentacles and urged me on.

All this time my mind was becoming more and more benumbed to any influence except the satiation of my insane longings. Little details vitally important to one bent on such evil escapades escaped me. Somehow, somewhere, I left a vague trace, an elusive clue, behind—not enough to warrant my arrest, but sufficient to turn the tide of suspicion in my direction. I sensed this espionage, yet was helpless to stem the surging demand for more dead to quicken my enervated soul.

Then came the night when the shrill whistle of the police roused me from my fiendish gloating over the body of my latest victim, a gory razor still clutched tightly in my hand. With one dexterous motion I closed the blade and thrust it into the pocket of the coat I wore. Nightsticks beat a lusty tattoo upon the door. I crashed the window with a chair, thanking Fate I had chosen one of the cheaper tenement districts for my locale. I dropped into a dingy alley as blue-coated forms burst through the shattered door. Over shaky fences, through filthy back yards, past squalid ramshackle houses, down dimly-lighted narrow streets I fled. I thought at once of the wooded marshes that lay beyond the city and stretched for half a hundred miles till they touched the outskirts of Fenham. If I could reach this goal I would be temporarily safe. Before dawn I was plunging headlong through the foreboding wasteland, stumbling over the rotting roots of half-dead trees whose naked branches stretched out like grotesque arms striving to encumber me with mocking embraces.

The imps of the nefarious gods to whom I offered my idolatrous prayers must have guided my footsteps through that menacing morass. A week later wan, bedraggled, and emaciated, I lurked in the woods a mile from Fenham. So far I had eluded my pursuers, yet I dared not show myself, for I knew that the alarm must have been sent broadcast. I vaguely hoped I had thrown them off the trail. After that first frenetic night I had heard no sound of alien voices, no crashing of heavy bodies through the underbrush. Perhaps they had concluded that my body lay hidden in some stagnant pool or had vanished forever in the tenacious quagmire.

Hunger gnawed at my vitals with poignant pangs, thirst left my throat parched and dry. Yet far worse was the unbearable hunger of my starving soul for the stimulus I found only in the nearness of the dead. My nostrils quivered in sweet recollection. No longer could I delude myself with the thought that this desire was a mere whim of the heated imagination. I knew now that it was an integral part of life itself; that without it I should burn out like an empty lamp. I summoned all my remaining energy to fit me for the task of satisfying my accursed appetite. Despite the peril attending my move I set out to reconnoiter, skirting the sheltering shadows like an obscene wraith. Once more I felt that strange sensation of being led by some unseen satellite of Satan. Yet even my sin-steeped soul revolted for a moment when I found myself before my native abode, the scene of my youthful hermitage.

Then these disquieting memories faded. In their place came overwhelming lustful desire. Behind the rotting walls of this old house lay my prey. A moment later I had raised one of the shattered windows and clambered over the sill. I listened for a moment, every sense alert, every muscle tensed for action. The silence reassured me. With cat-like tread I stole through the familiar rooms until stertorous snores indicated the place where I was to find surcease from my sufferings. I allowed myself a sigh of anticipatory ecstasy as I pushed open the door of the bedchamber. Panther-like I made my way to the supine form stretched out in drunken stupor. The wife and child—where were they? —well, they could wait. My clutching fingers groped for his throat . . .

HOURS later I was again the fugitive, but a new-found stolen strength was mine. Three silent forms slept to wake no more. It was not until the garish light of day penetrated my hiding-place that I visualized the certain consequences of my rashly purchased relief. By this time the bodies must have been discovered. Even the most obtuse of the rural police must surely link the tragedy with my flight from the nearby city. Besides, for the first time I had been careless enough to leave some tangible proof of my identity—my fingerprints on the throats of the newly dead. All day I shivered in nervous apprehension. The mere crackling of a dry twig beneath my feet conjured mental images that appalled me. That night under cover of the protecting darkness I skirted Fenham and made for the woods that lay beyond. Before dawn came the first definite hint of renewed pursuit—the distant baying of hounds.

Through the long night I pressed on, but by morning I could feel my artificial strength ebbing. Noon brought once more the insistent call of the contaminating curse, and I knew I must fall by the way unless I could once more experience that exotic intoxication that

came only with the proximity of the loved dead. I had traveled in a wide semicircle. If I pushed steadily ahead, midnight would bring me to the cemetery where I had laid away my parents years before. My only hope, I felt certain, lay in reaching this goal before I was overtaken. With a silent prayer to the devils that dominated my destiny I turned leaden feet in the direction of my last stronghold.

God! Can it be that a scant twelve hours have passed since I started for my ghostly sanctuary? I have lived an eternity in each leaden hour. But I have reached a rich reward. The noxious odors of this neglected spot are frankincense to my suffering soul!

The first streaks of dawn are greying the horizon. They are coming! My sharp ears catch the far-off howling of the dogs! It is but a matter of minutes now before they find me and shut me away forever from the rest of the world, to spend my days in ravaging yearnings till at last I join the dead I love!

They shall not take me! A way of escape is open! A coward's choice, perhaps, but better—far better—than endless months of nameless misery. I will leave this record behind me that some soul may perhaps understand why I make this choice.

The razor! It has nestled forgotten in my pocket since my flight from Bayboro. Its blood-stained blade gleams oddly in the waning light of the thin-edged moon. One slashing stroke across my left wrist and deliverance is assured . . .

Warm, fresh blood spatters grotesque patterns on dingy, decrepit slabs . . . phantasmal hordes swarm over the rotting graves . . . spectral fingers beckon me . . . ethereal fragments of unwritten melodies rise in celestial crescendo . . . distant stars dance drunkenly in demoniac accompaniment . . . a thousand tiny hammers beat hideous dissonances on anvils inside my chaotic brain . . . gray ghosts of slaughtered spirits parade in mocking silence before me . . . scorching tongues of invisible flame sear the brand of Hell upon my sickened soul . . . I can—write—no—more. . . .

Distressing March of the Crusaders Through Phrygia

THREE days after the battle of Doryleum the army commenced its march, and entered the mountainous country of Phrygia. Unforeseen distresses encompassed them. The co-operation of Alexius was cold and confined, when his great object, the reduction of Nice, was achieved; and his fears of the virtue of his allies had made him conceal from them the horrors of a passage through Asia Minor to Syria. From the ruins of the Nissian Seljuks, Saisan, the son of Kilidge Arslan, raised a force of ten thousand horsemen, and travelling into those countries which they knew would be traversed by the Croises, they represented themselves as victors. The people were unable to oppose assertions which could be supported by the sword; and they admitted the Turks into their towns. The churches were despoiled, the public treasures were robbed, and the stores in the granaries were eaten or destroyed. The miserable Christians followed their enemies through this wasted land. The soil too was dry and sterile; and Europeans could ill endure the heat of a Phrygian summer. In one day five hundred people died. Women, no longer able to afford sustenance to their infants, exposed their breasts to the swords of the soldiers. Many of the horses perished; the baggage (it was lamentable yet a laughable sight, says an eye-witness) was placed on the backs of goats, hogs and dogs. These animals too died of thirst and neither the dogs nor the chase nor the falcons could hunt the prey which the woods afforded. The Crusaders passed the Phrygian mountains and deserts, and reached a country where the very means of life were fatal to many. They threw themselves without caution into the first river that presented itself; and nature could not support the transition from want to satiety.

Remarkable Accident

A SINGULAR circumstance took place in the year 1820, at the Comedie Francaise.

Baptiste, who was playing the part of a bailiff, drew from his pocket a paper to represent the warrant by virtue of which he exercised his authority. What was his astonishment on reading the name of one of his female relations, who, through ignorance of a will which had been made in her favor at Dresden, was deprived of a considerable fortune bequeathed to her by her uncle. The paper was a true copy of this will.

Baptiste uttered several exclamations of surprise, accompanied by such comic gesticulations, that the theatre resounded with applause. The audience, however, were far from suspecting the real cause. Baptiste having carefully deposited the paper in his pocket, continued his part, and the next day communicated the discovery to his relation, whose claims were shortly after acknowledged.

This strange adventure is explained as follows: Some time before, a party of the performers of the Comedie Francaise proceeded to Dresden, to play in the presence of the sovereigns, who were assembled in that city. Among other scenic accessories, they found it necessary to procure a number of old parchments, and it is probable the document in question remained ever since in the pocket of the dress worn by Baptiste when he made the fortunate discovery.

Through This Romantic Tale of Love and Rapture Stalks the Grim Specter of Tragedy

The Vow on Halloween

By LYLLIAN HUNTLEY HARRIS

IT WAS Halloween, the time of revelry, when mysticism holds full sway and hearts are supposed to be united beneath the magic glow of dim lanterns. It was the time of apple bobbing, fortune telling, and masking in motley raiment, the whole glamoured over by the light of wishing candles.

Amid such scenes one never thinks of tragedy, but it treads apace, sometimes among the gay revelers, and many a domino or cowl covers that which would make the stanchest heart quake and is as different from the gay exterior as darkness is from light.

The lanterns glimmered, the varicolored lights shading and darkening with the winds that soughed through the beautiful old garden where the fete was held.

The pergolas, standing whitely aloof from surrounding density, made wonderful trysting places for the age-old stories of love to be whispered.

"You have made me very happy tonight, Audrey," a deep voice was whispering. "I think that all my after life will be a paean of gratitude for this moment of bliss. When you would vouchsafe no word of hope, not even one of pity, I felt hopeless, broken. Life seemed as senseless as a stupid rhyme! But now, dearest, life's cup is filled to overflowing!"

His lips met hers in a lingering caress.

For a moment the lanterns seemed to flicker and dim. A slight shudder ran over her slender frame. She freed herself gently.

"I cannot expect you to understand, Arthur," Audrey replied, "why you were kept waiting. The silence encompassed the whole of the earth and sky to me. It has been a frightful reality, which my tongue refused to explain until today, and my mental anguish has well nigh swayed my reason. A year ago tonight I experienced a terrible ordeal, more uncanny because it has seemed impossible for me to shake off the pall of it. It has changed the course of my life. For a year I have lived the life of a senseless thing, a piece of clay, merely breathing, eating, sleeping, but with no soul left me—"

Her voice trailed off into nothingness, and for a while both were silent. He was awed by her utterances. His arm tightened about her.

"Poor Audrey," he whispered, "you must have worried yourself needlessly. Is not illusion a sort of night to the mind which we people with dreams?"

"It was no illusion, Arthur, but grim reality. But last night a dream came to me which seemed to awaken my dead sensibilities, cut loose the spell under which I was living. In it I was commanded to tell you all."

Gently he caressed her.

"Tell me what you wish, dear, and nothing more. Remember, hope is better than memory. I am listening."

"I shall tell you all. You suffered, so nothing shall be witheld. My troubles began when my father had financial reverses. I gave music lessons to eke out a meager income. About this time Rothschild Manny came into my life. He loved me at sight, as intensely as I loathed him. One glance from his slanting, shifty eyes was sufficient to set me cowering in my chair, and if his hand by chance touched mine, cold chills chased over my body. He was like some demon, waiting his chance to spring upon his prey.

"Imagine my dismay, when my parent immediately began insisting on my marriage with this monster! His fortune would retrieve ours and would regain the position we had lost by financial reverses. The horror of it! After one lengthy argument I felt my brain reel, and I fell upon my knees crying and imploring my father to spare me this ordeal. He was obdurate and insisted upon my consent. Finally he sent for Manny, placed my hand in his, and gave me to him formally. But not once did I encourage him, and he seemed to change into a veritable demon. His eyes would become crafty as he looked at me and his face assume an expression of sardonic intensity.

"One day, the day that is seared upon my memory, one year ago tonight, he sought me out. I was alone in the house, my father having gone to the lodge. Manny was trembling under some terrible emotion.

"'Your welcome does not shine forth from your eyes, my dear,' he said as he seated himself and took my hand.

"With a gesture of horror I jerked it away. The motion seemed to infuriate him, and deepened the intensity of his eyes.

"'I came to take you driving,' he said, with a quick intake of his breath. 'The night is lovely and my new car is without. It will be yours when you are mine.'

"There was a steely intensity in his gaze directed upon me.

"'I don't care to go,' I said quietly.

"'Pray reconsider. I may be able to persuade you to feel differently if you give me a chance.'

"Here I interrupted.

"'I will do nothing of the sort,' I cried, 'I will go nowhere with you. I want nothing to do with you, and, God willing, I will never be your wife!'

"My words infuriated him. He was under some powerful influence of evil. He seized my wrist and, jerking me out of my chair, shook me violently.

"My senses reeled, and I must have lost consciousness. All I remember was being held up by main force, those horrible evil eyes boring malevolently into mine while he shouted in my ear:

"'Remember—young lady, you will drive with me—yet! Maybe not now, but some day! This is not a threat, it is a declaration, and neither stars, moon nor even heaven itself, shall deliver you from it.'

"I was thrown violently upon the floor. Merciful oblivion came to me.

"For days I was ill—not knowing, not caring what happened, craving death to relieve me from the sinister influence and deliver me from the effect of that

horrible vow on Halloween. When I recovered I learned that Manny, driving his car that day madly, had lost control and had come to a horrible end. His evil influence seemed to hold me drugged in its power. I longed to die. But death does not come when one craves it. I lived, a piece of senseless clay, until you came to me; and when I looked into your eyes I felt that heaven had been kind in denying me my desire. My heart, my soul, went out to you, but I couldn't let you know. I could never become your wife with that terrible vow sounding in my ears, that terrible power controlling me.

"Then yesterday, in the dim watches of the night a dream came to me. A voice spoke and said: 'Love beyond price is yours. Take and cherish it, lest this priceless gift be withdrawn!'

"I awoke, happy, myself once more, grateful that life could come to me again."

She nestled close and his hand caressed her hair.

"My darling, how you have suffered. My whole life shall be spent in keeping you free of the mirage of this terrible experience—"

"Beg pardon," a suave voice interrupted, and a cowled figure drew near, "this is my dance, I believe. Is it not too warm to repair to the ballroom? I have my car here. A spin will refresh us both."

The cowled figure bowed low. Audrey glanced at her card, and arose with a little laugh.

"You will excuse me, Arthur, won't you? It seems that this august domino person has prior claim."

With a light hand on the newcomer's arm she was lost in the crowd. The music from the palm-shaded orchestra stirred forth, hummed, throbbed, and sobbed into a soft requiem.

TWO days later, some belated wayfarers came upon a young woman, who seemed unable to move from her seat in an automobile. Upright beside her was a skeleton, whose sightless eye-sockets even then bored into the soul from which the light of reason had fled forever more!

Manny had kept his threat.

And in an old moonlit garden, under the white pergola where he had lived his one moment of bliss, a figure fell, turned into sudden clay, as the smoking weapon could testify.

A Spell Was Cast by the Cold Blue Eyes of a Skeleton, But Suddenly the Spell Snapped

EYES

By GALEN C. COLIN

"HAPPY" Bill Ransom of struggling Medical College days is now Dr. William Ransom, world renowned surgeon, and collects thousands in fat fees every year. But to this day the stare of a pair of unblinking, intense blue eyes will make him shudder. No matter what the possible fee, he will always refuse a case of optical surgery. His colleagues call it eccentricity—but I know different, for you see, there is a story and I got it first hand. It happened near the close of our last year in school.

I didn't usually study on Sunday evenings. A medical student who spends his days cutting up cadavers and listening to lectures on symptoms and ailments needs at least one day's relaxation each week. But final examinations began Monday morning, and I was not sure of myself in optical anatomy. That is the reason "Happy" Bill Ransom found me in my room that drizzly and drear June night.

There came a clatter at my elbow. Two tiny red lights flashed on. I turned to my door and called, "Come."

The door opened and there stood Bill. Big handsome, blond, poor as a church mouse but carefree and happy—that was Bill. His hat was gone. His hair was unkempt and uncombed. The usually radiant face was haggard and drawn. Dark circles were beneath his eyes. He staggered like a drunken man.

"For God's sake, Jim, the eyes! Turn off that damn thing!"

His voice was hoarse and broken as he begged.

He was looking at my door-knocker, a contrivance of which I was inordinately proud. It was a perfect snow-white skull with the lower jaw hinged. Tiny electric bulbs of red glass were in the eye sockets. A touch of the button outside my door turned on the red lights and set a toy motor running. The motor in turn started the lower jaw clattering.

"What's the matter, Bill?" I gasped as I threw off the switch.

He sank into my big Morris chair and covered his face with his hands. His body shook with a violent chill.

"Some jag!" I mumbled, half to myself.

"I'm not drunk," he said hoarsely. "Jim—Jim—I believe I am going insane. I've got to tell someone. You're the best friend I have in the world. Will you listen to me? Will you help me fight it off? You've got to, Jim!

"Calm down, old son," I said evenly, although I was beginning to get just a little shaky at Bill's palpable terror. "Sure I'll help you—you know that. What is it?"

"We've only three weeks more at the old school," he began. "Then we'll be full fledged M. D.'s. And Jim, I've wanted a skeleton to mount for my study. I have never before wanted anything quite so badly. It has become an obsession with me. I can't buy one. It is all I can do to earn my expenses. I have tried to trade for one—I have even been tempted to steal. Jim, I had begun to get desperate. The days were passing and I was still as far as ever from getting my skeleton. It maddened me that the cemeteries guarded thousands of skeletons and I could not even have the smallest and most insignificant of the lot.

"Last Friday I succumbed to temptation. I determined to desecrate the home of the dead. You don't blame me, do you? You know what it is to want something so badly that any sacrifice is not too great.

"Do you remember last Friday night? It was foggy and a chill was in the air. A light mist was falling—just enough to make each branch and twig along the cemetery drive moisture-laden and dripping. You couldn't see ten feet ahead of your face. I went alone. Under my arm was a grain bag in which to carry back the bones. A spade was my only tool, and I filched it from the caretaker's shed. An electric flash gave all the illumination I needed.

"I was not afraid of the dead—then. A medical student seldom is. Yet, as a heritage from our ancestors, a graveyard always holds something of shuddering dread—and this was a gloomy night.

"As I slunk along the drive, the wet branches slapped me in the face. I knew what they were but I could not repress a shudder at each cold touch. I could almost see the spirits of the dead. I could almost hear their protests at this vandalism.

"I searched among the headstones, reading the inscriptions. I wanted a body that had been buried long enough for the flesh to drop from the bones. The skeleton must be that of a man of intelligence, for I wanted the skull to be beautifully moulded. That is why I chose the grave marked. The name sounded solid and dependable—and he had been buried in 1902. The name doesn't conjure up the image of a haunting specter, does it? But, God, why did I choose that grave?

"I began digging. Deeper and deeper I went. Every spadeful of earth taken from the grave added to my dread. But I was desperate. Finally my spade struck something solid, something it would not penetrate. A few more spadefuls and I uncovered the box that held the coffin. I threw out the last of the earth—and with it went my terror.

"The wood was so badly decayed that it would hardly support my weight. It came away easily as I pried with the broad spade. The coffin came into view, an old-fashioned casket, solidly built, but not securely fastened.

"By the radiance of my flashlight I found the catch and threw back the lid. I was standing at the head. As the cover came up I had my first view of the skeleton. All the flesh had returned to dust, but the bones were snow-white and beautifully preserved. I first saw the feet—then the leg bones—then the arched ribs. I gloated—I laughed aloud and the grave threw back the echoes. Then the laugh froze on my lips as I looked at the skull.

"I screamed with terror. Clammy sweat dripped from my brow. The spade fell crashing into the naked ribs. Jim—you'll never believe it—two cold blue eyes stared up at me from the fleshless skull. They were glassy with hate. Unwinkingly, glaring back the light from my flash, they bored into my very soul.

"Again I screamed. Frantically I tried to climb from the pit. Three times I clawed my way to the top only to fall back among the bones. Still the eyes stared at me. They seemed to leer at my fright. The fourth attempt and I reached the top. Flashlight, spade, sack—everything was forgotten. I fled for my very life from those eyes. They seemed to follow me. They menaced me from every side. As I sped up the street and into my room they darted venomous glances at me from every street light. I slammed the door, and still those hateful orbs were with me.

"I tried to read. Those eyes came between me and the page. I went to bed but I could not sleep. After hours of tossing I dozed fitfully. I dreamed. The eyes were those of a demon. He tortured me with red-hot irons and glared sardonically at my helplessness. Again the eyes inhabited a corpse and I was bound to it hand and foot. Gradually it decayed and I could not break my bonds. At last it was the skeleton I had dug from the grave. I struggled, bound by that terrible sense of powerlessness which paralyzes us in our dreams. Finally I awoke. Those eyes! Those horrible staring eyes! I could see them everywhere.

"Then came morning—yesterday morning. I was weary and worn, but I could not study. I went to a picture show for distraction. All I could see was the eyes of the players, blue and cold. I tried to forget them in a round of golf. The little white ball stared up at me in a glare of hate—those eyes again!

"Last night I tried again to sleep. The same dream haunted me. Jim, I must sleep, but I cannot. Help me, Jim! Talk to me—reason with me! Jim—Jim—am I going insane? Will those eves haunt me forever?"

Bill was truly in a pitiable state. It would take but little more to push him across the bridge into insanity. But before he had fairly gotten into his story I knew the sedative to administer.

"Have you read the papers within the last two days?" I asked him.

"I can't read, Jim, I can't even think. What is news to me when those horrible eyes will not leave me in peace?"

"Listen to this," I began, as I picked up Saturday morning's *Gazette*.

> *"Some time during last night vandals entered Memorial Lawns and opened the grave of Robert William Sheldon, who died in* 1902. *Sheldon was noted during his lifetime as the only blind attorney in Kansas.*
>
> *"The motive of the marauders is not known as they were apparently frightened away before they had completed their designs.*
>
> *"The skeleton was shattered, but the skull containing the two wonderfully constructed glass eyes was strangely untouched."*

"Does that help you any?" I asked as I turned toward Bill.

But he only gasped once and sank back into the big Morris chair. His expression of terror had given place to a look of astonishment and blessed relief.

THE MAN WHO THOUGHT HE WAS DEAD

By GRANVILLE S. HOSS

"AS A MAN thinketh and so forth and so on," exclaimed Ed Wilson irritably, "such rot! How do you get that way, anyhow?"

"Now, Wilson," I remonstrated, "you condemn without a proper knowledge of your subject matter. I will undertake—"

"Oh, hush, Jackson, I know your head is filled with hobgoblins, ghosts and bogies and heaven alone knows what else. I suppose you will be telling me next that if I think often enough and hard enough that I am a blue monkey, then a blue monkey I will be."

"Tut, man," I returned laughingly, "you always take the extreme view of anything which does not happen to fit in with your preconceived ideas, but I can almost answer you in the affirmative, ridiculous as your query is. You remember Plato Goodsmith, I suppose?"

"That solemn old owl with his silly airs and enormous flowing tie a la Byron? Don't say you are going to prove your contention by him."

"But I do say that very thing. Poor Goodsmith is gone now and I will venture to say you knew nothing whatever of the manner of his taking. Very few did. Only his sister, the attending physicians and myself. It can do no harm though to make it public now as it all happened several years ago and Plato's sister has since joined him in "that beautiful land on a far away strand," leaving no connections behind who might be offended at the telling."

"All right, Jackson, shoot! I have another hour I can waste with you."

The above conversation took place one Thanksgiving night in the grill room of the club where Wilson and I had dined together. The weather was extremely cold for the time of year, the wind blew a gale, whirling and falling snow through the icy air, rattling the club house windows as though daring those inside to come out and do battle. Inside all was snug and warm; a great pile of logs blazed in the open fireplace, while overhead sparkled numerous electric lights. The waiter had cleared the table and when I tell you that on finally retiring, he left a tall black bottle and two glasses, together with a siphon of seltzer, you will know that the time was before Mr. Volstead and his crew made themselves famous; or infamous, as you please.

"Well, Wilson," I resumed, "let me say to you first that what I am about to relate will sound wilder than anything you ever dreamed or imagined. I shall undoubtedly be disbelieved and you will probably suspect my sanity, but I tell you now that every word of it will be true. Dr. Hobson and Dr. James, to whom you may go for confirmation of my tale, will vouch for every word of it.

I knew Plato Goodsmith all my life. We made mud pies together, were schoolmates and college chums, afterward maintaining our close relations, though of course, we were not so much to each other as during the earlier years. Goodsmith was a student and a dreamer, very much in earnest about even the most trivial matters, seldom ever smiling and utterly without a sense of humor; impervious to ridicule and solemnly dignified upon all occasions. In appearance he was tall and thin with a dark cast of countenance, black hair and bushy brows shading almost expressionless gray eyes. A long narrow face, deeply lined with thought, bearing a never changing expression of melancholy speculation. In dress, too, he was eccentric, always appearing in a soft gray hat, very low collar with an enormous flowing tie, prince Albert coat, pin stripe trousers and patent leather shoes.

My newspaper employment kept me very busy and for a time I had been out of touch with Goodsmith. I lived in a downtown boarding house, while he with his maiden sister, Miss Arabella, resided in a west end bungalow. They had a small income, barely sufficient to meet their actual needs and as Plato had a horror of the business world and its rough and tumble struggle for dollars, he was never able to add anything to their small modicum.

ONE day in the early spring, my work for the day finished, I started out in search of another room, the one I had being unsatisfactory for a variety of reasons. I had not proceeded far when I felt a hand on my shoulder and turned to find Goodsmith gazing solemnly down upon me, his mouth slightly twitching, which was about the nearest he ever came to a smile, "Ah-er-hem, Jackson," he said, "I saw you as I was crossing the street and hastened to overtake you. It has been quite some little time since we last met."

"Well, well!" I replied, "if it isn't old Plato! I certainly am glad to see you. How has the world been treating you? And Miss Arabella? She is the same as ever I hope?"

"Ah, yes, yes, we are much as usual Jackson, but ah-er-hem, I feel highly gratified by this meeting. Yes, I may say that, highly gratified."

"You have nothing on me, old boy, for I am right down happy to see you. I was just commencing a disagreeable task, looking for another boarding house, in fact, but that can be put off to some other time. Let us get in some place where we can talk. I want you to tell me all about yourself."

"Ah, no, Jackson, no, I am engaged you know on er-ah-a little literary work. Er-yes, I may call it that and I have set aside certain hours which I devote to that alone. Now er-ah-hem, you see, or ah, I should say you know Arabella and I occupy the entire house where we are at present and er-ah, there happens to be a spare room, er, yes yes, several spare rooms I might say, and hem-er, if you think you could put up with us, why er, surely you know you would be quite welcome and er-ah, company you know, yes yes. I should enjoy the arrangement immensely."

"Do you mean it, Goodsmith?" I asked, "But yes, I can see you do. Nothing could please me better; it will be like home."

"Hem, then we shall consider that settled. No no, not a word about terms. Whatever you and Arabella decide on will be very satisfactory to me. Ah-hem, we must hurry," he exclaimed, consulting a jeweler's clock across the way. "Yes yes, we must hasten or I shall not be able to resume my writing at the stipulated hour."

WE hurried along, soon reaching his place, an unpretentious little dwelling sitting far back in a spacious yard and surrounded by fruit trees. As we entered the front door Miss Arabella met us in the hall, a look of surprise on her face at the sight of her brother arriving with a guest. "Why, Plato," she commenced, "you should have—"

"Now, Arabella," he broke in, "ah-er-hem, you surely remember Henry Jackson. He has er-ah, that is, I have prevailed upon him to take a room with us. Hem, I quite urged it upon him, yes yes. Now I must leave you as it is past my hour for commencing work." Saying which he darted rapidly from us, disappearing through a door at the end of the hall.

"Why, of course, I remember Mr. Jackson, Plato's oldest friend," exclaimed Miss Arabella, "put your hat and coat on the rack and come right in. You know my brother so you must not mind him." She led the way to the library where a cheerful fire blazed in the grate and we were soon deep in reminiscences of times long gone by when she was just Plato's big sister and I an applicant for cookies and sugar plums. She was the same good natured creature she had always been, though now her hair was silvered and her face lined.

We were not long in coming to an understanding about my room, as her terms were easy and I would have agreed to anything in reason. Plato occupied a room on the first floor next to what he called his study, while Miss Arabella used one of the upstairs fronts and it was arranged that I should have a back one, of which there were two. I was to have only my breakfast and Sunday meals with them, which suited me well, as my hours were often uncertain. I was treated just as one of the family and was soon as perfectly at home as though I had never had another. We spent many pleasant evenings together, Plato and I having numerous heated but friendly arguments over his queer theories.

Our lives had gone on in this even tenor for a matter of six months, when one Sunday morning Plato joined us at the breakfast table looking even more solemn and owlish than usual; he seemed very much preoccupied, taking his chair mechanically without a word, and proceeding to tuck his napkin into his shirt front.

"Why, Plato!" exclaimed his sister, "are you still asleep? You seat yourself like one in a trance and return no answer to our greeting."

"Oh-er-ah," he commenced, rapidly batting his eyes and seemingly making an effort to collect his faculties, "yes yes, good morning Arabella, and you Jackson; er-hem, I fear my thoughts were wandering."

"I should think they were, my dear," returned his sister, "I never saw you so absent before."

"Yes," I broke in, "your mind was as far away as the north pole. I'll wager you have been evolving another of your wild theories which I shall have to argue you out of after breakfast."

"Er, no Jackson, not this time. But ah-hem, I have experienced a very unusual dream."

"Is that all?" I replied laughingly, "Come, tell us of it, that we may know the nonsense which occupies the mind of a scholar during sleep."

"Yes," he went on, paying no attention to my raillery, "very unusual and extremely vivid for a dream, if it was a dream."

"If it was a dream," said Miss Arabella sharply, "What in the name of goodness are you talking about, Plato?"

"Ah-hem, why, I saw him just as plainly as I see you and Jackson now and er-ah, his speech was very distinct, yes, quite so."

"Man, are you crazy?" I shouted. "Come Goodsmith, wake up; what is it all about anyway?"

"Yes, Plato," said his sister, "pull yourself together and tell us what has happened."

"Hem-ah, yes yes," he responded, making a visible effort to comply with this request and looking from one to the other of us. "Yes, er-ah, a figure, shall I say? Well, this figure appeared to me as I lay in bed. He was dressed like a fop of the reign of Queen Anne, but was fitted with skeleton head. He held his hat in his hand and hopped about with a mincing step as though entering a ballroom and all the time I could hear his skeleton jaws clacking, clacking. Stopping at the foot of my bed he peered at me long and earnestly, then extending his arm and pointing a long bony finger in my direction exclaimed, "Plato Goodsmith, place your earthly affairs in order for I shall return for you on Thursday morning." He spoke slowly and distinctly, then with the same mincing gait, turned in the direction of the door where he disappeared. I have been trying to convince myself that I saw nothing, that all was merely a dream, but it was all so real and his words seem to ring in my ears yet."

"Nonsense, old men," I said, rising and clapping him heartily on the shoulder, "Think no more of it. Dreams always go by opposites. Come, look about you, the sun is shining and the birds are singing at the window. Occupy your mind with our plans for the day."

"Well, er Jackson, this dream, if dream it was, has impressed me deeply, but yes yes, I shall make an effort; you are right, let us say no more of it."

"That is sensible, brother," remarked Miss Arabella, "why, I am surprised that a man of your common sense could be upset by so silly an occurrence."

"Well well, sister, I dare say you are right but ah-hem, let us not discuss it further. Now what can you offer me for breakfast this morning? I assure you I am ravenous," he finished cheerfully.

However, he ate scarcely anything, falling repeatedly into periods of abstraction, soon leaving the table and retiring to his study. We saw nothing of him during the day except at meal times when he seemed more like himself though still evidently pondering over his dream of the night before.

Next morning he appeared apparently as usual, discussing ordinary topics and making no reference to his unpleasant experience. It was the same on Tuesday morning and thinking to rally him a little and see if he was still thinking of the matter, I said as I was leaving for work, "Well, Plato, you have seen nothing more of your midnight friend have you, the Queen Anne dude with the death's head?"

"Er, no Jackson; no, but ahem, he said Thursday morning, you know, and this is but Tuesday."

"Nonsense, man," I responded, hastening down the steps, "forget it, dreams can harm no one."

I WAS sorry to have mentioned the thing again to him as I saw it was evidently still preying on his mind and it was with a feeling of relief that on hurrying home that evening I found him seated in the library absorbed in a book. We had one of our old time arguments that night and he retired to rest seemingly his old self.

When he appeared in the breakfast room Wednesday morning though, I knew that the phantom must have visited him again during the night. He looked pale and anxious and his hand trembled so he had difficulty in raising his coffee cup to his lips.

"Plato!" exclaimed his sister, "are you ill? Shall I call Dr. Hobson?"

"No no, Arabella, I er-ah, shall be all right presently. Quite well in fact. There is nothing wrong."

"Goodsmith," I demanded, "have you been troubled with bad dreams again and have you been weak enough to let it affect you in this manner?"

"Er, yes Jackson, I saw the same figure again and he reminded me, after inquiring if I had settled my mundane affairs, that he would come again Thursday morning."

"Of all the rubbish," I shouted, "and you a grown man almost forty years old, let such a thing upset you as if you were a child. Use your reason, Goodsmith. Consider the thing logically for what it is, a mere phantom of the mind and nothing more."

"Oh, but er-hem, it was really very vivid, Jackson and the words rang in my ears just as distinctly as your own now. I er-ah, know I was fully awake this time and hem, remember this was the second visitation."

His last words were said in a rather deprecating manner as though in apology for taking the matter so seriously and I felt rather bad toward myself for having spoken in such a rough tone.

"Well, well," I said rising, "take something for your liver and get out in the open; go out in the air and think no more of the matter. So cheer up, old man."

"Ah-er, yes Jackson, I dare say your advice is sensible, yes yes, quite the thing."

"I must be going," I exclaimed with a glance at my watch, "take good care of him, Miss Arabella and call Dr. Hobson. He is a cold, practical man and can possibly make Plato look at the thing in a rational light."

I felt unusually upset that day and showed it in the quality of my work which was not up to standard at all. I hurried home early and was met at the front door by Plato, who, without allowing me a word said, "Ah Jackson, may I have your presence in the study for a moment? I want you to perform a small service for me."

I followed him as requested and on entering the room found seated there lawyer Adams and Samuel Rugg, a neighbor, both of whom rose on our appearance.

"I merely wish you and Mr. Rugg to witness my will, Jackson. Mr. Adams has it ready for your signatures."

After the usual preliminaries this request was complied with and the two strangers departed.

"Er, Jackson, not a word of this to Arabella, mind. I ah, do not wish her to feel unnecessarily disturbed, you know."

"It goes without saying, old man, that I shall say nothing. But really now, have you let a miserable dream work on you to such an extent as this? I can not believe it."

"Oh ah, I merely wish to be prepared, Jackson, that is all. In case anything should happen tonight I have placed all my papers in order; my affairs will need no lawyer to untangle them."

"Tut, Goodsmith," I responded, "you talk like a man going to execution. Pull up and shake off such thoughts."

"Ah, Jackson," he replied mournfully, "possibly I feel like— But no more of this, let us join Arabella and remember, not a syllable of what has passed."

We found his sister seated in the library where we spent the rest of the evening talking of commonplace matters. Plato's dream was mentioned once by her, but the subject seemed to affect him disagreeably so it was dropped. I attempted to get a few words with him alone before retiring, but he bid us both good night and retreated hastily to his room. I felt considerably worried over my friend's state of mind and it was several hours before I could sleep. However, I at last dropped off and awakened next morning at the usual time. I dressed hastily and hurried to the breakfast room, my first thought being of Plato. I felt somewhat relieved to find Miss Arabella seated calmly at the table preparing to pour the coffee, so I said nothing aside from my ordinary morning salutation. We had finished our repast when she suddenly exclaimed, "I wonder what can be detaining Plato. It is long past his hour for rising. Can he be ill?"

"I will see," I responded, hastily rising and going in the direction of his room. Upon reaching the door I knocked, at the same time calling, "Plato you are late. Is anything the matter?"

There was no answer and I was just preparing to repeat my summons when Miss Arabella, who had followed closely, brushed past me and opening the door hurried inside, exclaiming, "Brother! Brother! What is the matter? Are you —Oh!"

She stopped at the bedside and stood looking distractedly at her brother. He lay on his back, his hands crossed over his breast. The face was pale, while the half parted lips retained some color of life and the eyes, wide open, seemed to gaze abstractedly at the ceiling.

WE both remained silent for some time, too stunned for action, then speaking with difficulty I exclaimed, "Oh, he surely can not be dead! Plato! Plato! Wake up, my dear friend! Come, rouse yourself!"

An answer came, low and solemn. It was the voice of Plato, but so changed. There was no movement of the lips and the sounds seemed as though issuing from a barrel or trumpet.

"I died this morning at three o'clock. The specter kept his word."

Miss Arabella, who had become very pale and trembled violently, completely lost consciousness at these ominous words and fell to the floor in a faint. I carried her to the library where I laid her on the lounge, then hastened to call Mrs. McGill from next door to care for her while I phoned Dr. Hobson. He soon arrived and I led him at once to Plato's room, rapidly explaining what had occurred from the first dream to the astounding assertion I had just listened to.

Dr. Hobson stopped at the bedside, gazing at the patient for a few seconds, then raised the right arm, fingering the wrist for pulse beats. He soon dropped it with a muttered exclamation and proceeded to make a thorough examination. He was busied in this way for possibly half an hour, then straightening up, looked to me with a wondering, puzzled expression, saying, "I can find absolutely no evidence of life, Mr. Jackson. There is no perceptible heart action and no sign of respiration. Yet the body can hardly be termed cold and the face and eyes certainly do not indicate death."

"At this moment the same hollow voice issued from the half open mouth of Goodsmith. "I died at three o'clock this morning. The specter kept his word."

"What can be the matter with him, Doctor?" I asked in an awed tone. "He certainly still lives though the spark of life seems very low."

Dr. Hobson remained silent for some time in deep thought, finally answering: "I am free to say it is the strangest case I ever saw. He seems to be in a hypnotic trance and in a state of almost suspended animation. I would like to call in Dr. James, if there is no objection; it may be necessary to resort to heroic measures you know. I want you to watch the patient closely until my return and at the first sign of recovery administer the restorative which I shall leave. I will return with Dr. James as quickly as possible." Leaving a small phial of colorless liquid, with directions for its

use, he hurried away while I remained at the post he had assigned me.

There was no change in the condition of Goodsmith during his absence. At intervals of about half an hour the same hollow voice exclaimed, "I died at three o'clock this morning. The specter kept his word." Dr. Hobson returned in the course of an hour with Dr. James, a trained nurse accompanying them. I left the room while they made their examination and talked the case over, which occupied them somewhat longer than two hours. I called my office, telling them I would not be down, then went to Miss Arabella, whom I attempted to console. This was an impossible task as she deeply loved her brother and sat in a state of dejection from which it was beyond my power to rouse her.

On emerging from the sick room the doctors came immediately to the library where we were sitting, Dr. James announcing the result of their efforts. "We have tried every means to rouse him," he said, "but without avail. He does not respond to the usual methods of awakening a hypnotic subject and apparently feels no pain as we have resorted to measures we would not think of using, did we not think the case desperate. Heart stimulants and restoratives have been equally powerless. We can only wait and hope for the best, trusting he will emerge naturally from his trance-like state. The nurse will stay with the patient and we will return at intervals during the day. She has full instructions how to act in case there in any sign of improvement."

They were as good as their word, making several calls during the day and night but there was no change in the condition of my poor friend. By the third day we had given up hope. The voice still came hollowly with the same dreadful announcement. The lips had lost much of their color and the face had assumed an ashen hue. The flesh was drawn and the body had become stiff as in death. I remarked to Dr. James that the patient resembled one who had been dead for several days. "Yes," he returned, "I had hesitated to mention it, but it is a fact that decomposition is actually doing its work, yet we know there is still life, the soul remains and continues to announce the death of the body. It is the most astounding case of the control of mind over matter that human eyes have ever witnessed. The subliminal mind has become possessed of an idea which it has assumed to be a fact—and behold the result! I fear that a few more hours will usher in the end."

The next two days passed as the preceding ones. The hollow voice still sounded and the body showed additional evidences of decay. The fifth night was exceeding hot and close. The nurse had removed her cot into the hall by a window where it was possible to get a little air. I rose early the following morning, meeting her at the door of her patient's room and we entered together. We stopped gasping on the threshold, overwhelmed by the putrid odor which filled the room. It was the odor of the grave. The doctors arrived at this moment and we all hastened in, forgetting in the awfulness of the situation the disagreeable air. The body had undergone further change. The lips were now ashen and drawn. The mouth had fallen open, while the face had a greenish tinge. The body lay in an advanced state of decomposition, the hollow voice came no more and Plato Goodsmith was indeed, dead."

An Account of a Family Who Were All Afflicted with the Loss of Their Limbs

JOHN DOWLING, a poor laboring man, living at Wattisham, had a wife and six children, the eldest a girl, fifteen years of age, the youngest about four months. They were all that time very healthy, and one of them had been ill for some time before. On Sunday the 10th of January, 1762, the eldest girl complained, in the morning, of a pain in her leg; particularly in the calf of her leg; toward evening the pain grew exceedingly violent. The same evening, another girl complained of the same violent pain in the same leg. On the Monday, the mother and another child; and on Tuesday, all the rest of the family were afflicted in the same manner, some in one leg and some in both legs. The little infant was taken from the mother's breast; it seemed to be in pain, but the limbs did not mortify: it lived a few weeks. The mother and the other five children continued in violent pain a considerable time. In about four or five days, the diseased leg began to turn black gradually, appearing at first covered with blue spots, as if it had been bruised. The other leg of those who were afflicted at first only in one leg about that time was also affected with the same excruciating pain, and in a few days the leg also began to mortify. The mortified parts separated gradually from the sound parts, and the surgeon had, in most of the cases, no other trouble than to cut through the bone, which was black and almost dry. The state of their limbs was thus: Mary, the mother, aged 40 years, has lost the right foot at the ancle; the left foot is also cut off, and the two bones of the leg remain almost dry, with only some little putrid flesh adhering in the same places. The flesh is sound to about two inches below the knee. The bones would have been sawn through that place, if she would have consented to it.

Mary, aged fifteen years, both legs off below the knees—Elizabeth, aged thirteen years, both legs off below the knees. Sarah, aged ten years, one foot off at the ancle: the other foot was affected, but not in so great a degree, and was now sound again. Robert, aged eight, both legs off below the knees. Edward, aged four years, both feet off. An infant four months old, dead.

The father was attacked about a fortnight after the rest of the family, and in a slight degree; the pain being confined to his fingers. Two fingers of the right hand continued for a long time discolored, and partly shrunk and contracted; but he subsequently had some use of them. The nails of the other hand were also discolored; he lost two of them.

It is remarkable, that during all the time of this misfortune, the whole family are said to have appeared well, in other respects, ate heartily, and slept well when the violence of the pain began to abate. The mother was quite emaciated and had very little use of her hands. The eldest girl had a superficial ulcer in one thigh. The rest of the family were pretty well. The stumps of some of them perfectly healed.

CALLED BACK

By DAN W. TOTHERON

YOU remember the case. The papers were full of it. It was a sordid, gruesome affair. A scrub girl was killed by a fanatic. His name was Will Hoist. Hers was Gladys Rogers. It was known as the Hoist-Rogers case.

I was reporter for the "Page," and, as a sort of last horrible chapter, I was sent to see Hoist electrocuted. He behaved disgracefully. He was as backboneless as a jelly fish. His eyes stared. His lips were positively blue. He had all the ear marks of an abject coward. I think he was the worst specimen of physical fear that I have ever seen and in my reporter days I have witnessed many men on their short journey to the chair. The last words Hoist ever spoke were ones familiar to me:

"I didn't kill Gladie," he protested until the end. "You ask Peter. Peter knows the truth."

During the long trial, he had often reiterated those sententious sentences, to us, meaningless. I knew them by heart but I had recorded them only as the jargon of a man demented by his crime. To probe him on the subject brought nothing. He would go so far and then stop.

Peter was his twin brother's name, Peter Hoist, the sculptor, whose new art was the sensation of last year's art exhibit. He was found dead in his bed from heart failure, three months before his brother, Will, became a murderer.

I therefore gave little heed to Hoist's parting words and in my story for the next day's "Page," I merely mentioned that he had gone to his death still protesting his innocence and implicating his deceased brother.

Since that time I have stumbled upon strange things and have, at this writing, more respect for Will Hoist's utterances. That is why, at this late date, I am digging up this gruesome affair and turning the poor Hoist brothers over in their graves. Strange and impossible as this story may seem, I feel duty bound to publish it. Hoist's name is on the black list and there is only a cross with a number marking his grave and if what I have learned can in any way exonerate him, if only in the eyes of a very few, I shall consider myself repaid.

I had almost forgotten the case being immersed in other matters. Hoist had gotten his judgment and fitting punishment and that was all there was to it. It was not circumstantial evidence that had convicted him. He had been seen plunging the knife into Gladys Rogers's breast by a girl living in the flat next door. She had come forward timidly the last moment and had clinched the matter. We were all angry at the stupid creature. She was a shop girl and fearing anything connected with cops, she had lengthened the life of the trial by holding back her valuable testimony. But you, who followed the trial in the papers, know all this.

Believing, thoroughly, Hoist's guilt, it annoyed me to have Jack Hayes, a fellow journalist on the "Page," come bursting in on me one lunch time at the Palace grill and interrupt my mastication of a thick steak, by exclaiming:

"Remember the Hoist case, Bert?"

Jack was always abrupt and annoying and he loved to slap people on the back, especially when they had a mouthful. I sputtered and glared at him and when I finished coughing and getting my wind pipe cleared, I said, "Of course, I remember it. Don't resuscitate unpleasant memories, Jack, and, for the love of Mike, kindly refrain from hitting a man on the back when he's in the act of swallowing."

"My error, Bertie," he laughingly apologized, at the same time sitting beside me in a place just vacated. He ordered a steak too, having no originality, all his stories are cut and dried journalism, and while he waited for the steak to fry, he told me that immediately after I had left the office, a woman had rung up the editorial room enquiring for me.

"No, you young devil," he chortled, although I had not flickered an eyelash. "It wasn't Mary Pickford asking for an interview or Lady Duff requesting you to visit her fashion show. It was only an old lady. Get it? An old lady with a cracked voice. I spoke to her myself and she was as ancient as the hills."

Here he poked me viciously in the ribs and here I state frankly that I never did like Jack Hayes.

"Well, what did she want?" I demanded, ignoring his scanty humor, if humor one could call it.

"Have no false hopes, Bertie. This old crone doesn't want to leave you her fortune. She simply wants to have a confidential chat with you about the Hoist case. It'll be cheerful no doubt. She says she hasn't long to live and her one desire is to see you before the Grim Reaper cuts her down. Sounds like Eddie Poe, doesn't it, or Annie K. Green?"

I was angry. I had dallied long enough with Will Hoist. He was dead. Let him remain in his ignominious resting place.

"But why should she pick me out of the millions for her death bed confession?" I cried, pushing away my coffee cup with disgust. "Check please, waiter. I'll not bother with it. You follow it up, Jack, if you care to. I'm through with Hoist and his whole nasty affair."

I was reaching for my hat and overcoat. Jack took hold of my arm. "Bertie, she said nobody but you would do. It seems she saw you at court or read your stuff or something. Anyhow she wants you and you only. Better follow it up, Bertie. It sounds like a wonderful story. Here's her name and address. Complete information."

He shoved into my reluctant hand one of his cards on the back of which was a hasty jotting in pencil. I did not read it then but stuck it irritably into my overcoat pocket.

"So long, Jack," I said, leaving him quickly.

"Better take my advice, old man," he flung after me, but I pretended not to hear him.

I STOOD on the sidewalk, for a moment, to light a cigarette and fumbling for my matches my fingers encountered Jack's card. I pulled it out and read what he had written on it:

Lorna Blanchard, 2021 Hubert street, City.

Hubert street is one of the shabbiest streets in our city. It is a pitiful street because it had once been something. It is like an old duchess in poverty. I know the street well with its gray rows of old-fashioned houses. It is a blowy

street with papers and dust always flying. The street had given me many stories, most of them disagreeable. A young girl had committed suicide in one of the gray houses. There had been a murder in another house. It is rich with food for ever hungry reporters. Perhaps the old woman did have something pithy to relate. I recalled Will Hoist's last words and with this new interest they had a portending sound.

I walked slowly up the street trying to decide. The afternoon was mine. I had counted on walking through the park to the beach. I needed exercise. Jack had said that the woman was dying. She was most likely dead now. I detested seeing dead bodies especially old ones. Well, all I had to do was to ask for Lorna Blanchard. If the Reaper had called before me, I could go away.

Looking around to see that Jack Hayes had not followed me, he was always up to tricks, I swung on to a car and got a transfer to the old trolley line that bumps along within two short blocks of Hubert street.

The sun was obscured by fog from the bay when I got to Hubert street and the old gray houses were desolate in shadow. I had never seen the place quite as melancholy. 2021 loomed up like a great gray vault and the iron picket fence around the small space allotted for a garden, but where no garden had bloomed for years, looked like the fences one sees around graves in old church yards.

I found, to my surprise, by reading a stained placard below the door bell, that Lorna Blanchard was a medium. She gave trumpet and cabinet demonstrations every Tuesday and Friday night. I began to imagine many reasons for this woman's summons as I rang the bell and waited for an answer. She had, of course, heard from the spirit of Will Hoist. Or it might be Peter. I have never taken much stock in spiritualism for I had attended many seances and had always run into tricks. These I had written for a Sunday editorial.

The door did not open for some time. I became chilled by the fog and the wind that sang mournfully about the big gray house. Finally the door was opened a very small crack by some one who asked, "What do you want?"

"I am Willows, reporter for the 'Page.' Lorna Blanchard sent for me," I said to the dim face peering at me through the crack.

"Oh, yes, just a moment."

The door closed and I heard slow foot steps ascending a flight of stairs. Then there was silence and then again foot steps decending the stair. This time the door was opened wide.

"Upstairs, if you please," invited a servile voice coming from an old man in seedy black who stood in the shadows cast by a feeble gas jet. The tiny blue flame served only to illuminate the first few steps and after that it was a case of feeling my way. The old man followed close behind me but he said nothing and made no apologies for the darkness.

At the top of the stairs, I found another dim gas jet and a long cold hall with countless doors opening into countless rooms. To one of these doors the old man led me; paused and knocked. He received no immediate answer, so he opened the door and looked in. A welcome rush of warm air came out to me and I could glimpse, over the old man's head, a small iron stove with rounded, flushed cheeks like a fat man with a fever. A voice, low pitched and musical, asked if that was Barlow.

"Yes, Miss Blanchard, this is Barlow and I've brought the man from the 'Page'."

"Oh, I am glad," said the rich voice followed by a deep sigh of relief. "Tell him to come in, Barlow."

I ENTERED a warm, high room, the one window of which, had a cracked yellow shade pulled down. The place was scantily furnished. It had a few plush bottomed chairs, a table littered with dusty volumes, dirty dishes, newspapers, and a ouija board; a heavy oaken bureau and a heavy oaken bed to match. That was about all. Above the bed, and staring wrathfully at me, was the crayon portrait of a fierce black whiskered man with a transparent veil covering the lower half of his face. Around his head were drawn moons and stars and planets.

These details I had short time to notice for my whole attention was instantly drawn to the woman lying in the middle of the heavy oaken bed. Her face was most unusual although so much of it had wasted away that her eyes and nose and high cheek bones were all that seemed to remain. What held me and stimulated my interest were her remarkable eyes. They were the eyes of a dead woman who was still lingering, with eyes only, between life and death. They were not of this earth and yet they still held the spark that is not for the dead. She fixed those startling eyes upon me and said:

"I was afraid you wouldn't come, Mr. Willows. You don't know how afraid I was. I am pausing between this world and the greater one to come but the door is rapidly closing. It is a heavy black door and I can push against it only a short time longer."

I leaned over her, anxious to catch every word. She was like a well written story, interesting from the start.

"What is it you want to tell me, Miss Blanchard?" I asked.

"I want to try and prove to you that poor Will Hoist did not kill Gladys Rogers. I want to lay the guilt at the right door. Please sit down. It is quite a long story. Tell Barlow to keep up the fire. It is cold here for you but not for me. I am free from all that. Can you hear me? My voice used to be very loud and clear. It sounds now as if I am whispering."

"I can hear you perfectly, Miss Blanchard," I said, seating myself on one of the plush bottomed chairs. Barlow was refilling the round stove with coal and the reflections of the flames danced on the room's stained walls.

"How did you come to send for me?" I enquired.

"I saw you often at different seances and when I saw you in court I remembered your face. In your writing you were always so kind to poor Will Hoist. You did not condemn him from the start as most of the newspaper men did."

Looking back, I had been rather square with Will Hoist even though he did exasperate me with his weakness. I did not tell the public he had played the coward before he died.

"How did you know my name?" I pursued. "I never had the pleasure of signing my stories."

"The board told me that," she said, and she indicated the ouija board on the table.

Barlow had taken a seat beside the stove and sat slumped over, his shadow, huge and black, cast behind him on the bare wall.

Lorna Blanchard turned her head slowly on her pillow; fixed me with her eyes and began her strange story.

"To begin with, Mr. Willows, I was nursing Mrs. Hoist when her twin boys were born. I was not a professional nurse. In fact, my father was training me to follow in his footsteps. That is his picture over the bed. He was a wonderful man but too far beyond us to be fully understood. I always feared him when he wore the black veil. We lived next door to Mrs. Hoist. She was a widow, a queer weak little woman who always leaned on me for advice. Her husband had treated her brutally and had bullied her. She had a bad habit

of cringing. Perhaps you noticed that poor Will cringed, too."

"Yes," I said. "Will Hoist was not a strong character."

"Peter and he were as different as the day and night. They were born a few months after their father had been killed in an accident. Mrs. Hoist was alone and without funds so my father permitted me to nurse her and be with her when her hour came.

"I remember the night well. There was a storm and far off rolls of thunder. The doctor we had called in a hurry, was fussy and inefficient. He made me very nervous. Will was born first and Mrs. Hoist, her heart failing, was almost gone. Peter was yet to be born. I saw that in a moment it would be too late. I took Mrs. Hoist's cold hand in mine, and with all my strength. I called her back. It was part of my father's training. She came through the black door reluctantly for she had been given a glimpse of what was on the other side and it had been fair to her.

"PETER was born while she lingered between the land of the living and the dead, just as I am lingering now. We, the doctor and I, had to work strenuously to keep Peter alive. At first we thought he was born dead. His little body was blue and cold. The doctor and I swung him around in the air and at last succeeded in bringing the flush of life into his body. He gave a faint cry. As we laid him down beside his mother and brother we found that Mrs. Hoist had slipped through the black door and had closed it forever behind her.

"I did not want to see the children taken to a charity institution, so I prevailed upon my father to let me take them home and care for them. My father was a man of means and I was ready to strike out for myself in the world. I had already conversed with the dead.

"The twins were, from the start, the queerest children I have ever known. They were deeply interesting studies. Will was the clinging kind just like his mother. Peter was absolutely independent. He led Will about by the nose. Will was glad to be led. He followed Peter like a dog and tried his best to obey Peter in everything. Will could never be depended upon, however, for his weakness always got the better of him during crucial moments and Peter would have to step in and do the thing himself.

"As children, they played strange games down near the river that flowed through the dark woods at the rear of my father's estate. They were not popular with other children so they played alone. Peter would invent the strange games and Will would play with him, half the time not understanding, yet he was not a stupid boy. I often watched them playing there, is those dark woods beside that sluggish river, and I never heard them laugh.

"A great deal of their queerness was my fault. I was too serious with them. My adventures in the spirit world were unconsciously conveyed to them. Peter was fond of asking questions and often I found him with my father in precocious conversation. My father was amuscious conversation. My father was amused by him and told me that the boy was clever, and, with proper training, would make a brilliant medium. Father called him Spirit Peter because he had been born while his mother lingered in the doorway.

"I foolishly told Peter how I had called his mother back just long enough to give him birth. That filled him with wonder and uncanny amusement.

" 'I was born while mother was as good as dead.' I often heard him telling Will and you can't imagine how terrible it sounded and how sorry I felt because I had told him. Will would stare at him in horror and he would go on to explain that auntie Lorna could call people back from the dead. His eyes would grow round and pale green like cat's eyes. Will's would, too. My, how they used to frighten me. They were so peculiar looking with pale skins, white eyebrows and lashes, and straw colored hair. They made me think of plants growing in a cellar away from sunlight.

"Peter developed early the artistic talent that later made him so famous. He found, near that dark river, a red clay that was fine for molding and with it he would shape the figures of his mind. When only eleven years old he brought to me his conception of his mother as a spirit that so pleased my father that he made arrangements to send him to an art school when he became older.

THE next year my father died and left most of his money to a research society that he had founded. I took the twins into the city and rented a hall where I began my life's work. I carried out my father's plans and sent Peter to the best art school I could find. At sixteen he won the first prize for a bust of his brother Will. During this time Will was developing along literary lines. You remember he was a contributor to a socialistic periodical at the time of the Gladys Rogers murder. He admired Peter and still looked up to him and still leaned on his judgment.

"One night when Peter was away sketching in the country, I was awakened from sleep by his voice calling to me, and I felt his long fingers clutching my arm.

" 'What do you want, Peter?' I asked. 'Are you in need of me?'

"His voice answered me distinctly. 'Call me back, auntie Lorna. Call me back as you did my mother when I was born.'

"I worked myself into a trance and called him back not knowing into what harm he had fallen.

"Three days later he returned looking even paler than usual and wearing dark purple shadows under his eyes. He explained that he had been in an automobile accident and had been nearly killed. He said that if I had not come to his rescue that he would not have lived. He limped when he walked. He kissed me and explained that he would not have minded passing had he not a great gift to give to the world. He was constantly talking about that great gift, my poor Peter.

"They were kind and thoughtful boys, those two queer ones. Will loved me most and it is only of late that I have learned how real and unselfish his love was. Ah, if I had only known sooner. My poor brave Will."

Here she paused and closed her eyes. A deep sigh escaped her. I saw her wasted form, under the covers, spasmodically quiver and then relax.

"Miss Blanchard, not yet," I cried.

She faintly smiled and opened her eyes.

"No, not yet, but very soon. The door is heavy. I must close it soon. Do you recollect the ruthless attack upon my religion a few years ago, when the fakers were exposed and we, who were sincere, were forced to fly from the storm of ridicule? Well, I was one of those who fled. I came to this place and have been here ever since.

"Will lived with me for a time and then moved uptown. Peter had a gloomy studio on Grant street. The two boys came to see me often and I was not unhappy.

"Peter first met Gladys Rogers at a friend's studio where she was doing the cleaning. He gave her his studio work to do, more as an act of pity than anything else. I cannot see what Will found in her. She was plain and unattractive. You know that from her pictures. She had no brains either. But yet he lost his heart over her. As it often happens,

she wouldn't consider the man who loved her. Her silly heart fluttered after the unattainable. It was Peter she wanted and Peter hardly knew she was alive. He was engaged in planning his great gift to the world. He was blind to all else.

"I often saw Gladys puttering about the studio and I quickly saw the situation. Will shamelessly neglected his writing and hung about the studio to feast his eyes on Gladys. I tried to make her appear to him in all her defects but he was love-blind.

"Peter was constantly in search of a model for his great gift. He insisted upon a certain type and turned many beautiful women away. He finally decided on an exotic creature, long and as graceful as a leopard. Her eyes were gray and almond shaped, dreaming like still mountain pools. She was stupid but she was given to long silences and did not betray herself. She posed in the nude for Peter and her body was the whitest I have ever seen. She looked almost transparent.

"Gladys, of course, became instantly jealous of Nina. She thought that because Peter chose her that he was in love with her. Nina came every day and stood on the model's throne and scintillated like a queen and Gladys was the little cat who looked and slunk about and did spiteful things behind Nina's back. Once I found her crying in the dressing room, where Nina kept her clothes, and when I asked her what was the matter, she spoke rudely and ran away.

"Peter's work progressed rapidly. He seemed consumed by inward fires. He would even phone Nina at three or four o'clock in the morning and insist that she come down and pose. Nina always came. She was afraid of him. His gift to the world was a mystery and always will remain one. He kept it under lock and key.

I SHALL never forget the night when Peter came to me and told me that the great gift was ready for the world. He was the happiest man alive, poor Peter. I was very proud of him. He went back to the studio and found his great gift smashed into bits. The door had been forced open and a mallet and chisel had done its cruel work. I think Peter almost went mad. He was never the same afterward. It was reported that he died of heart failure but it was really his brain. He never suspected Gladys until I foolishly suggested her. When he became convinced, he started out to find her. She had already proven her guilt by dropping out of sight.

"Peter lived only for revenge. His great gift had meant more to him than his life and now, that it had been ruined, there was nothing left for him but to destroy the wanton destroyer. He combed the city from top to bottom. Gladys had most likely gone to some suburban town. Peter never found her. He took to his bed, worn out, a skeleton of his former self. I went and nursed him. He prayed for God to make him strong until he had ended his search.

"Will came just before he passed away. He held Will's hand and fixed him with his eyes.

" 'Will,' he said. 'I'm dying but you must finish my search. You must avenge me. Promise that you will find Gladys Rogers and—'

"He did not need to finish it for poor Will understood. He shrank away but Peter's old will held him and made him give the promise. Then he passed beyond the door.

"After the funeral, Will told me that he was going to keep his promise. This time, he told me, he would not be weak and fail. It was my duty to prevent him and inform the police but I did not. I am a wicked woman, Mr. Willows. I had it in my power to save a human life and I let slip the chance.

"Will was gone for three months. I never heard a word from him during all that time and I was worried. I consulted my board but it told me nothing. I had not had communication with Peter since his death. That was worrying me too.

"On the night ofJune twenty-eight, you know the date, Peter came back. I was sitting in my room thinking of Will. Suddenly I felt Peter's long fingers clutch my arm and his voice asked me to call him back to earth. In obeying him, I was again dreadfully wicked. I don't know what made me so weak. It must have been my love for my boys.

"I called him back and I heard him come through my room, from my cabinet, and go out the door. I called him but he had gone. I began to cry for I knew he had returned for his revenge. I sank into a trance and knew nothing until the next day. And then I heard of the murder of Gladys Rogers."

"But nothing of this came up in court," I said. "Why was it you did not testify?"

"Because Will forbade it. But I would have testified, in spite of Will, had I known what I know now."

"What do you know now?" I asked, for I saw that she was breathing heavily. I seemed to feel the ominous presence of the Reaper.

"I know now that Will did not kill Gladys. I know now that Peter did not kill her either. Gladys killed herself. Yes, don't interrupt. Will left this with me. I followed his instructions and did not open it until he was gone."

She held up, for me to see, a few hastily written pages.

"In this Will has written the truth. He kept it a secret to shield me. It is really my fault that Gladys Rogers killed herself. I called Peter back. You see, on the night of June twenty-eighth, Will found Gladys in the Grayson flat. He fully intended to kill her but his love for her and his weakness prevented him from plunging the knife. It was then that Peter was called back by me. He went and stood behind Will and Gladys saw his spirit form. Mad with fright, she pulled down Will's upraised arm, and stabbed her breast with the knife. It was this scene that the girl, in the flat next door, witnessed. Gladys died in Will's arms and Peter went back to the beyond. Through me, he had accomplished his end. I am the guilty one."

Her wasted face turned slowly on the pillow. I could almost see the black door closing.

"Of course, no one will believe the story. They always said Will was insane. My religion is not considered seriously. But I know that you will present it to the world, Mr. Willows, in the best way you know how, and we will let them judge for themselves. Thank you—it is—Ah, the door—Will, I'm coming—Peter—"

She smiled as the door closed behind her and Barlow came up and leaned over her.

"She was a wonderful woman," he said, shaking his old head.

"Yes, very wonderful," I agreed with him, as I rose to go.

I felt dazed when I gained the street and I walked for a long time and let the fog and wind blow against me. I then caught a car and rode to the office and banged this off on my typewriter and here it is. Take it or leave it. Laugh at it or scratch your head over it as I have done many times since.

THE SUNKEN LAND

A Stirring Tale of the Canadian Northwest

By GEORGE W. BAYLY

IT WAS eleven o'clock in the morning when Tom O'Grady and I rode into a remote little Cree village some hundreds of miles northwest of Edmonton, Alberta.

We were both members of the Royal Canadian Northwest Mounted Police, (commonly called Mounties) and wore the scarlet jacket of that famous force. We had been detailed for special duty to find and bring back the slayers of a certain half-breed at Athabasca Landing. When last noticed the murderers had been headed in this direction, but since then two months had elapsed, and we had not obtained the faintest trace of their whereabouts.

It was, therefore, without much hope that we rode through the scattered lodges in search of the chief of the roving band. As we approached the center of the village our attention was attracted by a small crowd of Indians standing and squatting in a large semi-circle around a solitary white man seated on a soap box at the entrance to the chief's lodge. The man was sturdy and thickset, and gave one the impression of possessing great physical strength. His present attitude was one of calm and complete detachment, but as we approached he turned his head in our direction and called out:

"Hullo Gerald! hullo Tom! You're the very men I want to see."

It was the Dominion Government doctor on one of his periodical visits to the wandering tribes in that section of the Northwest Territories.

"What's up?" I asked, dismounting.

"I've found a dead white man in here," he answered, "and at the same time I've unearthed a mystery. Sit down and I'll show you."

As soon as we were seated he took a small match box from his pocket and handed it to me. Inside it there were ten small stones. I examined them carefully.

"They're diamonds," I said.

"Now look at this," and he took a rough, torn, piece of brown paper out of his pocketbook. On the paper, evidently part of a rough diary were the following disjointed notes:

entered the sunken land
S. lost. No tra
ip
Blue Clay Island
Lat. 60° 30' Long. 127° 10
150 miles
B. very sick. Must ge
ack

One glance at this scrap of paper was enough to show me that we were on the trail of the murderers. S. could mean but one thing. Sam Elliott, one of the men we were after, and B. must be Bad Bill Blake.

"Now let's see the dead man. If it's the one I think it is we'll know where to find the others. Eh, Tom?"

We followed the doctor into the teepee. One look was enough. Pat Corbeau, the ring leader of the gang had committed his last crime. It was now up to us to gather in his accomplices, dead or alive.

"When do we start?" asked the doctor as we came out into the sunlight once more.

"We?" I said. "Are you coming with us, then?"

"Why not?" he answered, shortly.

"Don't get sore, Doc. We'll be tickled to death to have you but it's going to be one Hell of a boring trip."

"That's where you're wrong," said the doctor. "I've heard rumors of this sunken land, tho' I've never met a soul that's been there; but that there's something uncanny and altogether horrible about the place I fully believe. Take that scrap of diary for instance. Read it by what's left unsaid, and you'll see what I mean."

"Nice cheery document," I remarked as I glanced at it again. "We'll bury Pat this afternoon and start off on the trail tomorrow forenoon. How does that hit you, Doc?"

"Fine," said that laconic individual without turning, as he strode off towards his own tent on the outskirts of the encampment. "Now we eat." We followed him a few paces behind.

IT WAS two weeks later. The day was far advanced, and the sun, low on the distant horizon, was sinking into a bed of heavy black clouds. Away to the south a range of mountains stood sharply silhouetted against the sky.

We were preparing camp, quietly, steadily, methodically; for the spirit of the trail had taken hold of us and conversation was reduced to a minimum. The horses had been taken back by the Indians some four days previously, and we were now entirely upon our own resources. We stood on the threshold of the unknown. Up to that point our journey had been a commonplace of northern travel. Work, danger, monotony, they had all come in the day's run. We had crossed many rivers, we had traversed a mountain range, until one day we had descended to a vast plain which stretched northwest as far as the eye could reach. This plain was typical northern country, grass land alternating with stretches of stunted black spruce and white birch, and stretches there were too, where sand and glacial boulders predominated, but this was all past. In front of us straight into the sunset, lay a low range of undulating hills.

After supper we smoked in silence for a time; finally the Doctor pointed to the hills.

"If I'm not mistaken, the Sunken Land begins beyond that low range. What latitude and longitude did you make it at noon today, Gerald?"

I took out my note book.

"My observation gave us an approximate latitude of 61 degrees 50' and a longitude of 126 degrees 40'. The sun was rather obscured so I can't be quite certain of my figures."

"That's near enough," said the Doctor. "We enter the Sunken Land tomorrow, and don't forget our agreement. Not one of us must ever, even for an instant, be separated from the other two. There's something queer about that country, and it's through getting separated that that other party came to grief; at least that's the way I have it figured. So let's keep together."

The next morning we began the climb of the low range, following a little valley we slowly ascended until we came to where it flattened out; we had reached the top. In front and below stretched a panorama of broken country, low hills alternating everywhere with plains, but the astonishing thing was that the whole country sloped downwards. As far as the eye could reach the hills continued.

"The whole land seems to have sunk," said Tom. "That hill on the horizon line must be thousands of feet below us."

I took out my field glasses and focused them on the horizon line.

"I can't see any sign of the lake," I said as I handed them to the Doctor.

"I don't suppose you can," he remarked, "if that diary is correct it's one hundred and fifty miles from here."

All day we traveled carefully, warily, expecting every moment to have to defend our lives against some hidden peril, but nothing out of the ordinary occurred. During the past weeks we had often discussed the fate of the men who had preceded us into this land, but the subject was baffling, as we had no clue as to the manner of their death.

Now that we had actually seen the country spread out before us, a feeling of vague alarm had taken hold of us—none of us could explain why. The country looked so very peaceful, but I could not help thinking of a story I had read, where ants the size of rats and of unparalleled ferocity inhabited a tract of barren rolling country somewhere on the borders of Afghanistan, and devoured all that came in their path. No animals could escape as they could run with incredible swiftness; consequently the country was entirely denuded of game. I told this tale to my companions, and though they appeared to treat it as a joke, I noticed that their watchfulness increased.

Sometimes we climbed the rounded hills, at others we descended their farther slopes, but always the descent was longer than the ascent. Towards the end of the second day we noticed a distinct change in the temperature. The country was getting warmer, vegetation too, began to increase, scattered pine, tamarack and birch trees became more numerous and game became abundant, (thus exploding the ant theory). Rabbits in particular seemed to overrun the whole country, while deer were quite plentiful. But the face of the country was undergoing a steady change, woods were appearing, taking the place of scattered trees, alder and ash also became abundant and finally I noticed a stunted elm.

"I say, by Jove, this is interesting," said Tom. "See the squirrels and small birds. Why, the country is simply crawling with game."

Being interested in forestry I found this change in forest conditions fascinating in the extreme. The country was, in fact, a paradise; nothing untoward had yet happened, and all sense of approaching disaster seemed to have vanished. The very air seemed clearer. In fact, we acted as if the danger were behind, rather than in front of us; unless the diary lied.

THAT night we camped by a small stream, and rising early the next morning, had been on the march for a couple of hours when Tom suddenly stopped.

"Do you fellows notice anything?"

We stood still and listened.

"I can't say I hear anything," said I.

"Nor I," said the Doctor.

"That's it," Tom replied. "There's nothing to hear; the game's gone. I haven't seen a rabbit or heard a bird for the last hour." We looked at each other.

"That's true," I said. "I wonder what's the trouble."

We looked carefully on every side; the country seemed the same.

"Nothing's changed from yesterday," said Tom finally.

"The trees are larger," I remarked.

"And there seem to be more creepers," added the Doctor.

"There's something queer about this," sputtered Tom. "Keep your rifles ready."

At noon we stopped in a little grassy clearing.

"Look, there's a rabbit!" I cried. "See the way it's running; something's chasing it."

We sprang to our feet, seizing our rifles. The creature tore past us without even noticing our presence, squealing as if in the most mortal terror, and disappeared in the opposite direction. Then all was still again. Not a sound broke the stillness.

"I don't know," said the Doctor. "I feel as if something were watching us."

"Yes, I feel that same way," said Tom, "but it's only natural. Fear is catching, even a rabbit's. It was probably only a weasel."

We agreed heartily, too heartily perhaps.

"Let's be moving," I suggested.

Before us the forest appeared much thicker, and the trees much larger, and I pointed out some oak and beech, as well as a few very large elms. The temperature was almost oppressively hot.

That night when we camped we chose an open space and lit a large fire, taking turns to keep watch, but nothing tangible occurred. The night was oppressively still, yet all through the night there were vague sounds of rustling and faint whisperings, now louder, now fainter; that was all. There was an uncanny strangeness about it which made us distinctly uneasy.

The next morning we talked it over, and the Doctor's opinion was that if at any time we were out at night, it would be a good plan to carry torches. This suggestion met with approval, so we spent an hour before starting out in making a few for each of us, and fastened them to our pack sacks.

All next day the temperature kept rising, and as we progressed, the vegetation became more and more tropical. We were now progressing in single file along a trail, made in all probability by the ill fated party which had preceded us, as the forest growth had not yet had time to obliterate the recent traces of man's handiwork.

As night approached we began to look around for an open clearing, for the prospect of spending the night in the thick undergrowth among these giant trees in the presence of an unknown peril, was far from reassuring. To make matters worse the ground was becoming swampy; little stagnant pools and rotting vegetation appeared on every side, making the going more and more difficult.

Suddenly Tom, who was leading, stopped and remarked:

"It's no use going on. This may get worse and worse instead of better, and we can't camp here, so I think we'd better go back to the last clearing we passed. How far do you think it is, Doc?"

"Two miles, I should think."

"All right then, about turn and we'll have to hurry. The sun's just setting."

THE darkness came on quickly, the great trees shutting out the afterglow, and we were soon straggling along in a very uneven manner, the Doctor now leading, and Tom bringing up the rear. The uneasy feeling of the previous night began to take hold of us and at the same time our resolution about torches flashed into my mind. Without a moment's pause I stopped and calling to the others, pulled out a torch and lit it. The others did the same.

"That's better," said Tom. "Now we can at least see where we're going."

But the flare and flicker of the smoky torches only seemed to accentuate the

darkness of the forest about us, and as I glanced from side to side I felt sure that again an evil presence, a gruesome, nameless terror, was keeping pace with us on either hand. I spoke about it to the others. They too, felt the same fear. The night was dreadfully still, but again we noticed a faint whispering sound; but now it seemed all around us.

Suddenly the whispering seemed to grow louder and more menacing. I saw the Doctor start to run; already he appeared a long way ahead. All at once his torch disappeared from view for the trail had taken a bend. At that moment I, too, started to run—wildly. I had felt something soft and clammy grasp my throat, while I thought I felt innumerable little feelers gripping my face and body. With a scream I fought them off with my torch, and realized a moment later that my nerve was going and that the little feelers had only been a creeper and the branches of some trees. A moment later I was running close behind the Doctor. Suddenly I turned round.

"My God!" I cried. "Where's Tom!"

We started down the trail, the hair literally rising on our heads. There was nothing but black darkness behind us and from the darkness came a hum as of angry bees. Suddenly—there was a distant shout.

"Ger-ald—Ger-ald. Come back—my torch has gone out," and then—then came a prolonged scream of agony and terror—"help—Gerald—hel—" followed by a choking cry of mortal terror—then silence.

Throwing off our packs we raced along the trail at top speed. When we reached the spot where he had been we found his rifle and his pack, evidently thrown off in the desperation of a fight for life. And—that was all. Tom had completely vanished. We searched the ground with our torches and called and called and fired our rifles—but all to no purpose. No sound broke the stillness of the night. Even the whispering had ceased.

We returned to the trail and fetching our packs we brought them back to the place where Tom had disappeared. Then we gave way to utter despair.

How long we sat I don't know, but it must have been some considerable time, for the first thing that roused us was the dying splutter of my torch, which had been stuck into the ground at our feet. This effectually brought us back to a sense of our position and to the danger of thus sitting still. I lit another torch and turned to the Doctor.

"What are we to do now?" I asked.

"I'm sure I don't know," he answered. "Camp here I suppose and light a large fire. We'll have to wait for daylight before we can do anything."

As soon as we had a good fire going we put out our torches, and making ourselves as comfortable as the swampy condition of the ground would allow, we lit our pipes and settled down to wait for morning.

An hour passed: then softly, ever so softly, a faint, almost imperceptible murmur began to come from the tree tops.

"Sounds like a breeze," I said tilting my head a trifle to listen.

"Yes, it does," assented the Doctor, "but unfortunately we know it's no such thing. Throw some more wood on the fire."

"What do you thing it is?" I asked, as in strained attention we listened to the increasing murmur.

"God knows," answered the Doctor, with a shrug.

"Do you think a rifle is any good against it?" I went on.

"No, I do not," he replied shortly.

"Why?"

"To tell you the truth, I don't know," he said.

"I've been thinking over the events of the last few hours," I went on, "and there are one or two things that strike me as especially curious."

"For instance," suggested the Doctor.

"Well—for one thing," I said, "We're in a far northern latitude, yet because this country is many thousands of feet below the upper plain, the temperature has increased to such an extent that all the conditions of life down here are tropical."

"Yes, yes," interrupted the Doctor, impatiently, "I know all that. We've discussed it many times."

"But this is my point," I said. "These are *not* the tropics. This is an entirely abnormal condition, therefore, life as we know it, may have undergone a complete change, or at least a modification."

The Doctor nodded. "Go on."

"In that case the animal and vegetable life may have characteristics entirely unknown to us, and quite foreign to those with which we are accustomed to deal."

The Doctor was lost in thought.

"I see what you mean, but don't generalize. Come down to something definite."

"That I can't do," I answered, "but I have a suspicion that this thing which is menacing us is more or less impalpable, *but* is armed with innumerable feelers, which I actually felt round my throat and on my face and all over my body a while ago."

The Doctor abruptly sat up.

"By God, that's true!" he cried. "I remember feeling them too, but I thought I was imagining things, and decided they were only creepers and branches of trees, after all."

"That's not all," I went on. "The thing can only see at night; light apparently blinds it."

"In that case," said the Doctor, "our best hope lies in our knives and hatchets and in having plenty of light. Throw on some more wood, Gerald."

The next morning we were up at the first hint of daylight, and after a hurried breakfast, determined to prosecute a thorough search for our missing companion, in the faint hope that we might at least gain some clue as to the manner of his death. Plunging into the undergrowth we soon struck a small stream, and advancing in single file along the bank, found that it narrowed down to a mere brook, and finally lost itself in a great green morass of sponge like mosses, into which we sank up to our knees. The place was horribly haunted by clouds of enormous and most venomous mosquitoes. This swamp seemed to extend without end in front and on either side of us.

"It's no use," said the Doctor. "We'll have to give it up and go back and make our way to the lake as quickly as possible."

All day we traveled along the narrow trail, making a slow, but steady speed. For a forest land it was the most wonderful that the imagination of man could conceive. The thick vegetation met overhead, interlacing into a natural pergola, and at last through this tunnel of verdure, in a golden twilight, we caught sight of the lake, beautiful in itself, but marvelous from the strange tints thrown by the light from above filtering through the foliage.

CLEAR as crystal, motionless as a sheet of glass, green as the edge of an iceberg, it stretched before us. In the center was a small conical island, entirely denuded of trees, while at our feet, where the trail ended, lay a small raft imbedded in the mud.

"There's our boat," I said.

"Well, we still have about an hour of daylight," said the Doctor. "That treeless island looks the most beautiful place in the world to me at this moment.

Whether it was the sound of our voices or something else, I don't know, but at that instant the whispering began in the tree tops and from moment to mo-

ment the sound increased. Looking up we saw leaves and twigs in violent motion high in the crowns of the trees. Too astounded to move we watched the strange phenomenon. Suddenly without any warning the whole tree seemed to spring into life. The giant branches curved down and swept the ground, and every twig and leaf seemed to be stretching out towards us. And at that moment as if aroused by the clamor of the tree, every plant and shrub began to stir with life, violently agitating their long tentacle-like stems, the edges of which, rasping upon each other, produced a whispering or hissing noise.

"Good God," screamed the Doctor. "The trees, the trees. I'm caught!"

"Use your hatchet," I cried as I sprang to his rescue and severed a long sinuous tendril that had twined itself round his waist. At the same instant I felt a steel-like vise closing round my ankle, and fell heavily. Turning I saw an enormous plant which had been near the path, waving its tentacles like a huge octopus. It had a short thick trunk, from the top of which radiated giant tentacles, narrow and flexible, but of extraordinary tenaciousness. The edges were armed with barbs or dagger-like teeth. It was one of these sinewy feelers, which inclined at an angle from the trunk, had laid itself flat upon the ground, and at the touch of my boot had risen and like a gigantic serpent, had entwined itself about me, and was drawing me towards the center of the stump, where my body would soon have been crushed until every drop of blood had been squeezed out of it and absorbed by the ferocious plant.

A cold sweat broke out on my forehead as I noticed other feelers flailing the air in search of me, and in the frenzy of despair, I slashed at the tendril round my leg and with two quick blows severed it. Immediately it rolled itself up into the parent stem.

"Run! Run!" I yelled to the Doctor. "Into the lake!"

Tripping and falling and rising again, and slashing to right and left as I ran, cut and bleeding from the giant barbs, I rushed into the lake. Turning, I saw the Doctor madly cutting at a creeper that had him by one arm. In another instant he was free from it, and with a frenzied bound was in the lake beside me, his clothes all torn and his face streaming with blood.

We were up to our waists in water, but safe for the moment from that frightful nightmare. We watched with gruesome fascination the madly tossing forest, the long feelers still groping and searching for us.

"Isn't it ghastly?" I said.

We were nearly sick with the horror of what we had escaped, but when I had sufficiently recovered my mind and some wind and some of my nerve had come back, I began to look around for some means of escape from the predicament in which we found ourselves. My first thought was of the raft; it looked small and seemed firmly imbedded in the mud. However, with only a small amount of effort we were able to launch it and climb aboard. It was nearly flush with water but with care we were able to cross safely, propelling ourselves by means of a crude sort of sweep which was fastened to one end.

THAT night, after a good meal from our fast diminishing stores, we slept the sleep of utter exhaustion, untroubled as yet by any fears for the future. Next morning we found our cuts and scratches very sore, but with plenty of iodine and a roll of bandage, we were soon fixed up and ready for the exploration of Blue Clay Island. Climbing the conical hill we found, as I expected, that the center of the island consisted of the crater of a small, extinct volcano, the floor of which was covered with blue clay mixed with small boulders.

"There's your diamond clay," I said.

The Doctor nodded.

We descended into the cup shaped valley and soon found the spot where the murderers had started to excavate. We spent the rest of the day then looking for gems and turning over the solid clay, but we were only rewarded with one minute stone. Whether our want of success was due to lack of experience or to the fact that we did not dig deep enough, I can't say, but the fact remains that that stone was the only one we ever got from the mine.

From this time on our every effort was bent towards trying to find way of escape, but we were stopped at every turn. We circled the lake in an endeavor to find a landing place, but everywhere the trees seemed to sense our approach, and we dared not land. Two or three days passed in this way, while we grew more and more desperate. Finally on the evening of the fourth day, as we were sitting by our fire smoking, our energy almost exhausted, the Doctor spoke, deep dejection in his tone.

"It's no use, Gerald. I give up. We'll either have to try to make our way through the forest where we came in or die of starvation. We have only a few more days' grub left."

"Before we do anything as rash as that," I remarked, "let's tell each other all we know about this place, put all our cards on the table, and we may be able to work something out when we have our data all together. I'll begin. To start with, look at the forest now. Not a leaf stirring, is there?"

The Doctor looked intently at the shore line with my field glasses.

"No, everything is as calm and peaceful as possible."

"Now watch the trees."

I took a fair sized stone and threw it into the lake about a quarter of the way across. There was a big splash.

"Any sign?" I asked.

"No."

"Well, look at the water line where it meets the shore by the big pine and keep looking and tell me when the ripples get there."

"All right," he said a moment later. "They're lapping the bank."

"Now look at the tops," I directed.

The Doctor uttered an ejaculation. "That's a remarkable thing. They're all in motion. Whatever made you think of that, Gerald?"

"You see," I went on, "how hopeless it is to try to reach the shore without letting the trees know of our approach."

"That's true," said the Doctor, "but we can land on that little sand beach just to the right of the path."

"Yes, that's point number two. And number three is, the nearer the lake the fiercer the trees."

"I don't see any more points," said the Doctor slowly.

For a long time we sat moodily staring into the fire. Then, slowly at first, but finally with a flash of inspiration, the idea came, and I smiled. The Doctor, who had been watching me dejectedly, suddenly exclaimed:

"You've got a plan, Gerald. Spit it out."

I pointed to the fire. "We'll burn the forest," I said.

Ever since our first entry into the Sunken Land, the weather had been dry; consequently the timber on the island, which, as the diary showed, had all been cut down by our predecessors, was in first class condition to start a fire. The only question was, would that forest burn?

"We'll have to build a bonfire on the beach and have everything all set for the first big wind from the northwest," I said.

"A regular funeral pyre," remarked the Doctor.

For the next two days we toiled from daylight to dark, ferrying logs and brushwood across the lake and scientifically building a large square pile which covered the center beach, and at the apex, for the top was conical, was nearly fif-

teen feet high. The forest at this point consisted of a pure stand of pine, mostly longleaf, with some loblolly admixture, which was a great piece of luck for us, as this pine is highly resinous.

Our preparations were now all made; the wind only was wanting. We made a number of torches and got everything in readiness. Then, while waiting for the weather to change, tried our luck with the blue clay once more, but with no success.

Four days passed. Then one night I was awakened by feeling a strong breeze from the northwest blowing over me. Quickly rousing the Doctor we sat up and listened.

"It's rising," I said.

"Yes, it's rising, but we're going to have rain. We haven't a minute to lose."

Hurrying down to the raft we paddled across.

When we got back to the island our landing was as bright as day in the light of that enormous fire, which, fanned by the rising wind, was roaring above the tops of the nearest trees.

"Let's go up to the highest point of the island," I suggested, "so that we can follow the course the fire takes with our field glasses."

The conflagration was now well within the pine stand, and was already beginning to spread fanwise; momentarily the wind increased, driving clouds of sparks and dense clouds of smoke high into the air. We watched it fascinated; our lives hung upon the result.

I handed the glasses to the Doctor. "The fire has reached the mixed forest. Will the deciduous trees burn?"

The Doctor pointed to the East. "Look, Gerald, the dawn."

"I feel a drop of rain," I said.

Overhead heavy gray rain clouds were tearing across the sky.

"Let's cross," suggested the Doctor.

"No use," I replied. "We'll have to wait until tomorrow morning."

Late in the afternoon we crossed to have a look at things. The rain was coming down in torrents, and the wind had dropped to gusty breeze. We made our way into the charred forest for a couple of hundred yards. Nothing molested us; apparently our way lay open.

The next morning we made an early start, for the weather had cleared and a bright sun was shining. We followed the path of the fire all morning until we reached the edge of the green morass where Tom had disappeared. Here the fire had burned itself out, but its purpose had been accomplished. We were safe.

The object of the expedition from an official point of view had been achieved, but at a terrible cost. Poor Tom had paid with his life, and to us the price seemed far too high. It is true that no trace of the last of the murderers, Blake, had been found, but we had had sufficient proof of the impossibility of escaping from the island in any other way than that which we had taken.

He had tried to pass the forest and had—failed.

Hypocrisy Detected

IN the parish of Severin in Paris, there lived an individual, who exteriorly was of the most regular conduct, and enjoyed the reputation of loving virtue, and delighted in good: assiduous to every exercise of religion, he seemed to follow its maxims with exemplary fervour. The clergy and the inhabitants of the parish were edified by his behaviour, he was looked up to as a paragon of the piety, and named the holy man. He was far from being what he appeared. Under the veil of devotion he concealed the most atrocious and depraved soul. When out of church, his sole occupation was to inveigle poor young girls into his house, and promise to put them apprentices with honest people. But far from fulfilling such respectable engagements, the wretch sold the unhappy victims, and delivered them up to the most shameful prostitution. One of the unhappy girls, who for three days was struggling for her virtue, had courage enough, not only to resist, but to form the praise-worthy resolution of making the suborner known to the police. She found a bit of paper in her place of confinement, and with her blood traced the detail of her misfortunes on it, and then threw it out of the window, after having directed it to the rector of the parish. Luckily it was found by a gentleman who brought it to the priest, and told him where he had picked it up. The priest went to the attorney-general, and made him acquainted with the subject of the note he had received. The attorney-general said, he had for a long time been searching, but in vain, for a wretch in that predicament: he assured the ecclesiastic that he would, without loss of time, bring the villain to condign punishment: he accordingly wrote to him in the following terms: "Being informed that your charity is become proverbial in the parish you live in, I wish you could grant me half an hour's conversation at my hotel, I have something important to communicate to you, and that you may favour me sooner with your company, I do not hesitate to tell you that it has reference to some pious designs." The man full of confidence, flies to the attorney-general, who received him with the most apparent cordiality, and told him that he had some thoughts of proposing to his Majesty the creation of a new office, and that he destined him for it, that the title of, "Father of the Poor," would perfectly agree with his virtuous conduct. In the meantime a commissary and four agents of the police were rummaging his house. They there found twelve young girls in the greatest misery, most of whom had already sacrificed their virtue. They reported the whole affair to the attorney-general, who had the hypocritical villain arrested and conducted to prison, where he was destined to pass the remainder of his days. The young girls were taken care of by the parish.

The Dancing Partner

By GUY L. HELMS

"YES," said Chief Miller, "ghosts are always traceable to some human agency. The agent may not be responsible, as is often the case, and when such an instance occurs it makes a much deeper impression than does the premeditated plot. Now take this Heddon case for an example, it has the whole town upset. I remember another time—" he paused to light the never finished cigar while we waited hopefully for him to begin one of his justly famous stories.

We had just come in from the scene of the complicated Heddon murder case. The chief was feeling especially good and we knew he had finally reached a satisfactory solution of the mysterious crime.

Miller was a fine old man with snow white hair. Chief of the city force for many years he was the veteran, and the hero although he would never admit it, of many blood-curdling adventures. He was wont to relate some of the more interesting of these at times when he was elated over the solution of a problem. He was a wonderful story teller and we showed our immediate interest by straightening in our chairs the better to catch every word. No one spoke for fear that the tale would not be forthcoming. He hated interruptions of any kind.

"I remember" he continued, "when a certain young fellow's hair turned white from the effects of a tangle which, though directly responsible, the persons implicated had in no way planned the action.

"I used to live in the South, you know, and among the lower, and even some of the middle class, superstition holds sway to this day. In 1880, when this incident happened, it was much worse.

"I was a lad of twenty-two and engaged to the prettiest and sweetest girl in all the world. We, my mother, my father, and myself, were simple country folk living on the remnant of what had once been a large old southern plantation. Our darkies were of the old slavery type, extremely superstitious and very easily scared. Outside of those two faults and the race habit of stealing they were mostly interested in the welfare of 'Missy,' 'Ol Massa' and 'Marse Gus.' So when my engagement was to be announced nothing would do but that they should hold a 'chivaree' in the negro quarter.

"Instead of the usual custom the announcement dinner and dance was to be at my father's house. After dinner and before the dancing started we were all going down to Mammy Lou's to watch the negroes at their party, always an interesting and entertaining thing to see.

"Everything at the dinner went smoothly and after making public the announcement which was already in the hands of the public, as is usually the case, we started for the cabin where Mammy Lou lived. Mammy had opened her house to all the nearby 'cullud pussons' that night and the party was in full swing.

"But things were not going as they should. I noticed the restlessness among Mammy's black guests as soon as I stepped across the threshold. Mother noticed it too for she immediately asked me to find the cause of the uneasiness among the negroes who were generally so carefree. Mammy, good old soul that she was, did not want to worry her 'Marse Gus' on the first night of his life and I was unable to get a single word of explanation out of her. 'Go on Marse Gus' she replied to my questioning, 'dey's just shy, dat's all; nuffin but dey ain't quainted yet.' This about darkies who had known each other since childhood. But nothing could be learned from her so I tried one of the bucks who seemed to be the center of the uneasiness. I got him off to one side and found that he was the direct cause since the night before he had seen the Fulton cemetery ghost, a ghost which every negro in the section absolutely knew existed. Among the negroes the ghost had been the topic of conversation at every gathering for the past six weeks. The fellow who claimed to have seen the apparition the night before was a strapping black, afraid of nothing under the sun, but he visibly trembled when he told me of his experience. I knew him to be as truthful as the usual run of blacks were and therefore gave some credence to his story. I knew there was something behind it. I found that something later.

"Just as the black was finishing his tale the door swung open and Mammy Lou's son John, fell across the doorstep.

"No mortal can ever picture the fear showing in the face turned toward me in a mute plea for protection. His eyes were protruding from his head and only the whites were showing, like those of a drunken man. His face was the ashen grey color of the whitewashed walls of the cabin. He uttered inarticulate sounds between the rasping sobs of his breath. His body was racked by great gasps that shook him all over. He was the very image of terror, stark, unspeakable horror. Not a word could he form but crawled to me as a whipped dog crawls to its master.

"Pandemonium broke loose. Instantly every negro in the house became imbued with the terror showing so plainly in John's face. Every voice was raised in howls for mercy although not a thing was to be seen. What there was to be afraid of no one knew nor cared. The unknown quality only intensified their fear. They gathered in a shivering black group, holding on to each other for dear life and whimpering like lost children. All calls for water for the helpless negro on the floor went unheeded. No one of them would stir.

"Finally I managed to bring John to himself enough to get the words 'Fulton,' 'graveya'd', and 'ghos' out of him while he groveled on the floor at my feet. Nothing more could he say.

"'He has seen the ghost,' said my mother. And I knew that was what had happened.

I KNEW something must be done at once. The negroes wouldn't be fit for night work, nor any other kind of work to tell the truth, until the ghost had been proven non-existent. Besides, my sweetheart with her girl friends and their escorts were watching me. I knew they were wondering what I would do. A spirit of bravado took hold of me and on the spur of the moment I declared myself in on the worst fright it has ever been my lot to receive.

"'John,' I said, 'I am going over to that graveyard and get your ghost for my dancing partner tonight.'

"Mammy went straight up in the air when I made this assertion. Like a

tigress she was at me, holding my arms and clawing me in the struggle to dissuade me from the trip. With all her puny old strength she hung on, begging, crying, that I should not go. Mammy had been my foster mother, as many a negro has been to her 'Massa's' son, and she loved me more than she did her own black children, as much as my own mother did. She knew in her old heart that I was going to worse than death and her whole soul went into the plea. She was aided in her efforts by every one in the house except my male friends and they had an idea that it was a fitting adventure for a soon-to-be bridegroom. And to top it off they had the nerve to tell me that I wouldn't carry out my boast—that I was afraid to go. Of course that clinched the case, I would have gone had I known the ghost really existed. So telling Mose, Mammy's husband, to saddle my horse, I started to the house for my pistols.

"As I was getting my guns, I told my father where I was bound and what I was going for. Of course he laughed and bade me be on my way—such was ever the way of my dad. Then to the barn where I found my friends had saddled Button for me.

"Mother, Margaret, and some of the other girls tried to persuade me to give up the mad idea of a two mile ride to the graveyard on such a mission, but I could not turn back after making such a foolish declaration in spite of the fact that I was already sick of it. I was too proud to turn back now. Amid the pleas to be careful from the women and the good natured jibes of the men, I started on my quest for a supernatural dancing partner.

"As I rode I reviewed the numerous stories which were being circulated about the ghost, all told along the same line. It seemed that on certain occasions the white figure with out-stretched arms was sure to appear and chase every lone traveler along the road which ran parallel to the cemetery. Sometimes two or three persons had seen the ghost on the same night—never together though. It only appeared to those who traveled alone.

"There was no doubt that something was seen and that it had the whole countryside aroused, not only the ignorant negroes but the whites as well. As for that something being a spirit I was doubtful, more than doubtful, I scoffed at the idea. Nevertheless as I went over the different stories a feeling came over me that I was doing something I could have just as well left to someone else. I began to get just a little nervous as I neared my objective, but though I wished myself well out of the escapade, my foolish pride would not allow me to turn back after going so far. I couldn't bear the thought of my friends' ridicule and there was nothing to do but go on with the mad adventure.

"I can see that graveyard now as plainly as I did on that night forty-two years ago, so indelibly is the picture impressed on my memory. The moon was up, but a dew-mist hung close to the ground touching everything with a weird, ghostly grayness which is made especially for such adventures. The effect of the moonlight through the mist added momentarily to the nervousness that seemed to be enveloping me. The quiet night, the sudden harsh chirp of a cricket, the throaty whine of a tree-frog, all flooded me with a sense of the unreal. I had heard the same sounds every night of my life without paying the slightest attention to them and saw no reason why they should fill me with dread and uneasiness on this night. I had a feeling of impending disaster when I entered the gates of the cemetery.

"The graveyard was located in a space of almost virgin forest. Huge old elms, bent and twisted oaks, young shrubs tangled among the graves, all covered with honeysuckle vines and Virginia creeper. The tombstones gave off a ghostly gleam of whiteness due to the fact that they were almost covered with vines—the white shining through like the bones beneath them—taking on the forms of skeletons. Here and there a gray slab shone through the trees where the mist-deadened effect of the moonbeams made them stand out—truly a monument to the dead. The mist just thick enough to bring out the loneliness and decay of the place. It was Death and the abode of the Dead.

"I rode up among the graves and stopped, first thinking to dismount and thoroughly explore the shadows on foot. But while I waited all idea of getting off my horse left me, driven out by the peculiar feeling that someone was watching me. Button was displaying an unusual amount of nervousness also and I knew that he had seen or scented something out of the ordinary. A noise here, a sudden sigh of the faint breeze, the swinging of the moss-covered limbs in front of me—everything seemed to fill me with a horrible fear, not exactly a fear, but a dread of what was to follow. My heart was in my throat, nearly choking me with its quickened expansion. I started on my round of the graves expecting every minute to see the white-clad figure, and praying that I wouldn't.

"Nothing happened and I made a complete circle of the tombs without seeing anything to account for Button's nervousness, although I always had a feeling that I was being observed. Riding up to a long coffin-like tomb on my way out I stopped Button to take my bearings and have one last look around before leaving. This tomb was about two feet high, of the same width and at least six feet long, parallel to the gravel path on which my horse stood. My wondering courage began to re-assert itself and I laughed shakily to think I had put so much stock in the superstitious stories of easily frightened negroes. Then too, I was just a little elated that I had finished my ride without anything materializing.

SUDDENLY Button shied with a snort, almost unseating me. At the same instant I saw through the corner of my eye, a white figure detach itself from the tomb and leap for my horse. I could have sworn nothing was there an instant before. The figure simply came from thin air. I felt hands, bony, dead hands, tighten around my waist. My blood turned to water and my hair stood on end. My heart stopped its beat and terror seized me. Unconsciousness would have been a blessing. I tried to scream and no sound came. I tried to move my arms but horror had locked every bone in my body. I could not move. Those fearful, clammy hands were moving here and there over my body as though seeking some tender spot to settle upon.

"My horse jumped to a full run with a scream of mortal anguish that only a dying animal ever gives, a scream that sounds like the agonized cry of a woman or child in pain.

"Over my face, through my hair, crept those hands—those searching, slimy hands of horror. My head was busting with pentup fear. An unearthly shriek, like that of a lost soul, a fiendish, playful soul, exulting over its prey. The damp smell of a moldy grave burdened my gasping nostrils. I couldn't breathe.

"I pictured in my tortured mind the decayed face behind me shedding its flesh and grinning as the moldering pieces dropped at each leap of the horse. I wondered if mine would be the fate of the ghoul behind—if I too should bring terror to some living mortal. All this in a detached sort of way as though I were only a spectator.

"All this time Button was running as he had never run before. I have no recollection of coming to the house, no

thought of home ever entered my mind, only to be rid of the *thing* clinging to my back.

"Then my horse reared to a sudden stop and dropped slowly to the ground. I knew in the same detached way that he was dead—and wondered if my time had come too. I couldn't move, I didn't want to move. I only wanted to rest, to have it all over with. I felt the hands steal slowly to my throat and tighten there into bands of steel. My strength, my will, my reasoning power were gone and I sank into a dreamless sleep.

"Slowly I awakened and voices made themselves clear through the haze of semi-consciousness.

"'He found his dancing partner,' said one.

"'Yes,' said another and I recognized it as my father's 'but imagine riding two miles, killing a horse, and being almost choked to death by a crazy woman whom everyone thought harmless.'"

The old chief sat up in his chair and rubbed his hands through his white hair.

"I'll tell you, boys," he said slowly, "that ride of mine sure played the dickens with the thick head of black hair I had then."

THE LAST ENTRY

(*In the Diary of R. Q. P.*)

By MEREDITH BEYERS

JANUARY 27th (Near Midnight)

It has been a long, trying, and very unusual evening. I do not understand why I should be treated in this way.

I admit that I was a bit hasty in losing my temper at Bronty; but when a man takes it into his head to talk as he did to my wife, right under my nose, I'm going to rough him up a bit, even though he is my friend and my guest.

I got the worst of it, anyway. We clinched for a moment and then unclinched a little too suddenly. My head hit the corner of the mantel and it knocked me out for a second. They lifted me to the couch. And then the strange part . . . They refused to stay in the same room with me! I followed them up but they completely ignored me.

Bronty took his hat and coat and ran indignantly from the house without permitting me even to tell him that I was sorry. And I really was sorry. I had carried the thing too far. It was meant as a joke, probably. I took it entirely too seriously. I always do.

And here's another strange thing. Helen wouldn't have anything to do with me after that. She pretended not to see me, and when I started to apologize she screamed and rushed from the room. And then when I followed her upstairs to bed she carried on so that I had to come down here to the den. There's nothing to do but write, so I'm writing.

Why, even the nurse would have nothing to do with me. I went up to the nursery the way I usually do, to look at the little things asleep in each other's arms, and she closed the door in my face. I was about to speak to her, but she came out again and brushed right by me without so much as turning her eyes in my direction.

I wanted to cry, the children were so beautiful. That's really the only place to find innocence and happiness and understanding—with little children. I stayed a long while with them, and then the nurse came back, so I slipped out without her seeing me.

It is all very strange. I have a curious feeling that there is something wrong that I don't know. I wonder if I could have done or said anything in that second after my head hit the mantel, something that I don't remember.

I feel all hollow and lonesome as if the whole world were against me. No one understands. Why, if only Helen would listen to me. If she would only tell me the trouble, perhaps I could say something or do something that would make it all right again. No one wants to have things smooth and peaceful more than I do.

I hear her coming down the stairs now. I am going to face her with it calmly, but I'll wait, first, and see what she's going to do. I'll sit here writing as if I didn't hear her, and see if she'll come to me.

She's going to the door. I didn't know the bell rang . . . There's something so queer. She is letting in a lot of people, but I am not going to let them know I even hear them. I am going to keep on writing. They are coming toward the landing here by the den. They are very silent. They are standing looking at me. I must turn this sheet over so they won't see what I have been writing. . . .

* * * * *

Four minutes later:

Oh, my God! Let me tell you what happened before I faint. . . .

WHEN I turned the sheet of paper over Helen uttered a cry. I stood up in astonishment and found myself facing Helen and Bronty and three or four strange men. Two of them were policemen. They were looking with such ghastly and horrified expressions, not at me, *but at the pen I had just laid down.*

Oh, God, I am growing weaker. Even now the pen seems to weigh fifteen or twenty pounds. It is like trying to write with a steel rail. But I must tell you what she said—Helen—when they were staring into the den. She pointed with her fingers.

"Did you see it?" she screamed in a hoarse voice.

"The paper moved!"

"Yes, but the pen!" she shrieked, "Oh, God! Bronty, the pen! It was up in the air writing all by itself with nobody to hold it."

Then she fainted and they carried her into the parlor. I can't hold this pen up any longer. Everything is fading before my eyes, and I am seeing such strange things. Why, I can even see through the walls! Helen is stretched on the davenport and the rest are bending over a form on the couch. I wonder who it can be. That's right where Bronty put me after I hit my head on the mantel. They are examining his head. I don't know who it is. It's all like a dream, a horrible—

In Your Wildest Imaginings You Will Not Guess What Killed These Men Until the Author Reveals It To You

The Purple Death

By EDITH LYLE RAGSDALE

NANAH, Payne's Indian servant, came racing across the ground, his eyes rolling, his dusky face a distorted mask of hideous fear. As he reached his master his limbs seemed to buckle and bend beneath him. Sprawling at Payne's feet he threw his arms about the white man's legs, and sobbed out a disjointed tale of horror.

"Again, Sahib," he wailed, "again has the fearsome Thing come in the night, and this sunrise, after Nanah had been to the stream to fetch water, Nanah found where it had entered the tent of the Sahib, and—oh, merciful Allah, the Thing has struck again!"

The Indian, growing incoherent, began rolling about on the ground, sobbing, not loudly, as one would imagine, but in heart-broken whimpers.

Payne's set, mask-like face became a shade grayer, the deep-set blue eyes a bit sterner, the inflexible mouth harder.

"So," he said, "another of us has an-

swered the call. Who is it this time, Nanah?"

Nanah gathered himself together and ceased whimpering.

"This time it is the Sahib Arnold."

Payne winced. Arnold had been his friend. Of all the little army of adventurers, treasure-seekers and big game hunters the dead man had been nearest his heart.

"How—?" he questioned the Indian.

"The same as always. The Thing had entered like—like—"

He sought a suitable word.

"Like a *yaksha* or a lost *jnana*. There is the same look of fear and horror on the sirdar's dead face. The same purple line about the mouth and the limbs are drawn up as though the sirdar's agony had been, indeed, great. Like, Payne, Sahib, all the others."

Payne nodded.

"Like all the others. No marks, nothing disturbed about the camp?"

Nanah shook his turbaned head.

"Not, Sahib."

The white man turned.

"I will go to the tent. You, Nanah, go tell Captain Worthington."

Payne, head bent, walked slowly across the intervening space and entered the tent of his friend.

Every smallest detail was as Nanah had said. Nothing had been disturbed, nothing stolen. No footprint, save Nanah's, marred the dust before the door. Arnold's clothing, money and watch were intact. Payne made sure of all this before he turned to the distorted body on the bed.

For a long time he stood and looked down at the corpse. Again the words of Nanah rang true. Arnold had suffered, terribly. The fear of something worse than death was mirrored in the wide eyes, and written on the cold, dead face. The swollen and clenched hands, the knotted leaders which had drawn the knees up almost to the chin, the cords of the neck indicated it.

And sinister beyond words was the purplish ring about the mouth.

Payne's blood congealed. An indefinable dread shook his soul. What sort of a weapon had the murderer used to leave such a mark? Who, or what, was the Thing? Questions, unanswerable, rioted through his mind.

Silent, shuddering, Payne went over the events of the past six months. The story was, up to a certain point, void of anything dramatic. Rather hackneyed. He, Payne, together with eleven other adventurous spirits, had embarked for India, where, so rumor declared, were great beds of platinum, unworked and worth many times over the proverbial "king's ransom." After a period of prospecting, the beds had actually been located, and with a small army of half caste workmen they had been getting out quantities of metal.

Everything had "come their way," to use Hunt's words. The grains of platinum were thickly scattered through the auriferous sand, and at each washing a small fortune was panned.

The climate, in that particular part of India, was ideal. There was fruit in abundance. Game for the shooting. Fish for the hooking. A stream of pure water. Nature was prodigal with her gifts, and for weeks the adventurers had lived in a sort of paradise.

To the south of them, over in the jungle, the Temple of Indra reared its dome. There a sacerdotal sect chanted hymns to their deity; their white-robed priests moved quietly about; and there, so the white men had heard from their servants, one of the devotees hid, beneath the folds of his snowy turban, the brain of one of the most renowned surgeons the world has ever known.

All these things, taken as a whole, were enthusiastically enjoyed by the platinum hunters. They looked upon the naturally provided food as a godsend. But the priests, even though of an alien tongue and creed, were, beneath the white robes and swathing turbans, men. And, no matter where one may be, human companionship counts.

A sort of acquaintance had been struck up between the white men and the priests. When they chanced to meet there was always a friendly word, a nod or smile. In a strange land the friendship of these men was a real asset.

The first month in camp passed happily. The twelve white men worked, played, ate, slept. There was not a cloud on the horizon.

Then one day Nanah had come screaming to Payne, sobbing and wringing his slim, brown hands, crying hysterically that Borden was dead.

Investigation had proved the words of the Hindoo. Borden had been dead for hours. Examination showed no marks upon the body. He had not died from any sort of bite. No beast had torn him. At night, just before retiring, he had been superabundantly healthy. His spirits were soaring. The whole twelve had indulged in a rough and tumble play. When bedtime came he had laughingly bid his companions goodnight.

When found his body was stiff and cold. His limbs were contorted, his eyes wide open. A purple ring surrounded his mouth.

That was all.

The one medical student among them who acted in capacity of physician, gave, as his opinion, that Borden had died from acute indigestion.

Sorrowfully the survivors buried their friend and heaped stones upon the grave to protect the body from prowling hyena and jackal pack.

Before Borden had been in his grave a month a young medical student was sleeping beside him. His death was, apparently, identically like Borden's.

Then, swiftly, Marlow, James and Radcliff had followed. All just like Borden, even to the smallest detail.

And now Arnold was gone.

Six of the twelve had succumbed to the Thing!

Payne groaned aloud.

"What is it?" he cried brokenly, "this hideous Thing that strikes in the dark?"

An ague shook him. He, like a frightened child, wrung his hands and moaned.

"Who," he sobbed pitifully, "who will be next? Merciful God—who?"

The space in front of the tent filled rapidly. Captain Worthington and the four men, the half-breed laborers and the body servant of the whites gathered closely about. A common horror held them all.

Captain Worthington entered the tent, his friends at his heels.

"What do you make of it?" he asked Payne.

The latter shook his head.

"I—do not know. I am absolutely unstrung. I am beginning to fear—what shall I say? Necromancy—voodooism—witches? Something, Worthington, is terribly wrong. It is not reasonable for each of the six men who have died to possess the exact symptoms naturally. There has not been a particle of difference in the characteristics of these deaths. What killed one killed all."

"Admitted. But what was it?"

The captain mopped his clammy brow.

Again Payne shook his head.

"I—don't know."

Dean withdrew his gaze from the ghastly spectacle upon the bed, caught the eye of Nanah and with a muttered oath turned to Payne.

"I believe it is the work of some of these damned Indian conjurers," he cried. "Strange, isn't it, that Nanah has found every one of the six—like—that?"

He pointed a shaking finger toward the bed.

The eyes of Payne and Worthington met. Subconsciously each had begun to entertain some such weird belief. The entire land reeked with mysticism. Everywhere the occult was apparent. Though good, hard common sense ridiculed the theory of the supernatural as a factor in the deaths of the six men, the fact remained that they were all dead from an unexplainable cause.

They had died from no known disease. There had been no abrasions, not the tiniest pin prick. But they were dead! Something had killed them!

In a row, out there beneath the blossoms of the monkey-bread trees, were five graves. Before the sun went down Arnold would be filling the sixth.

Who would be next? Who would occupy the seventh grave?

Payne shook off the incubus of fear that gripped him and looked toward the spot where he had last seen Nanah's bright turban. The place was vacant! The young Hindoo was gone!

Dean, nerves on edge, cried out, pointing toward a banyan grove: "There he goes—the son of a dog!"

In the scramble that followed, in which Indians joined but to circumvent the whites, the Hindoo, Nanah, made good his escape.

When all hope of capturing him was gone, the men returned to camp. Upon one thing they were all agreed. The Hindoo had used black magic. And, also, they all felt the rest were doomed to go the same way unless Nanah was caught and summarily dealt with.

Worthington, head bent, sat and smoked innumerable pipes of strong tobacco. When he spoke his companions listened intently.

"I am going to the Temple of Indra," he began. "I am going to ask the monk, the surgeon, you know to come over and take a look at poor old Arnold. If he is the man they say he is I believe he'll be able to tell us how they've passed out."

He paused and tamped more tobacco into his pipe.

"I do not believe these deaths have occurred naturally. I've seen lots of dead men but—boys, what makes that purple ring about the mouth?"

He sprang up and paced excitedly about.

Dean, eyes filled with dread, took up the question.

"Aye," he said huskily, "what makes it? No common death leaves a mark like that. There's black magic back of all this."

He sank again into moody silence, shaking fingers describing a circle about his lips.

"Purple," he murmured. "Purple death!"

Payne and his comrades exchanged glances. It was patent that Dean was wavering on the brink of a collapse, hovering above the narrow line which separates the sane from the insane.

Worthington, shoving his own dread to the back of his mind, spoke almost cheerfully.

"Come on, Dean, let's walk over to the temple. I've a hunch the priests of Indra will be able to put their finger on the trouble."

Dean, still running a stodgy finger around his lips, arose and followed Worthington.

Three hours later they returned, accompanied by the surgeon-priest. On the way back Worthington had given the Hindoo all the known facts in the mysterious series of deaths.

When the camp was reached the priest entered Arnold's tent, paused beside the cot and stood looking intently at the corpse.

Payne, to whom the waiting had been soul-sapping, spoke.

"What do you think of this, taken in connection with the five other deaths?"

The turbaned devotee of Indra turned, and for a fleeting instant Payne almost cowered beneath the look in the gleaming eyes.

"Think?" he said softly, "What is there to think? Death comes to all alike. Perhaps not in the same manner. But it comes. And there are many things much worse than death. To the good—Sworga."

He lifted his eyes rapturously. After a short pause he resumed.

"This man, no doubt, suffered terribly. I am quite certain he did."

He smiled and Payne could have sworn he detected a diabolically exultant expression on the brown face.

"But he did not die from disease. He, from all indications, died from *—fright!*"

The eyes, which Payne had thought malicious, were melting with sympathy. The white man felt a revulsion of feeling as he gazed upon the kindly face.

"It was the uncertain light," he mused, "and my nerves. I must get a better grip on myself."

The Indian again spoke.

"There are no signs of disease."

He ran his long, taper fingers over the body.

"No abrasions, no contusions, no fractured bones."

With a shake of the head he stepped back.

"I could perform an autopsy. But it would tell you nothing. Nothing that I cannot from the signs here tell. Fear—fear alone—killed your friend."

"Oh, but see here!" expostulated Hunt, "that is preposterous! All six of the men who have passed out were—men. There was not one weakling, not one coward, among the whole lot. For the most part they were ex-service men. Men who never turned a hair at such little pleasure parties as St. Mihiel or Chateau-Thierry. Men who have roughed it all their lives. No sissies nor perfumed dandies in the bunch. Men that would have fought their weight in wild cats—"

He broke off and cast a puzzled, miserable look about.

"Hunt's right," said Payne. "Those boys weren't the scarey stripe. I, like Dean, think there's something mighty rotten about the whole business. And I think that damned black-skinned Nanah's at the bottom of it. Get him and fill his black hide full of lead and the rest of us will be able to get out of this hole alive."

For Payne, usually dubbed "The Silent," this was a long speech.

"It may be," acquiesced the priest, "Nanah's father was a sorcerer."

His eyes held a rapt expression. The twisted thing upon the cot seemed to have lost interest for him. His mind, plainly, was elsewhere. Some scene, conjured up from the past, gripped him.

Worthington jerked impatiently about.

"See here," he demanded, "can't you, if you are as learned as they claim, tell us just what caused the boys' deaths? It's idiotic to suggest anything frightful enough to scare six husky, daredevil rounders to death. I believe it's just what Dean says. Some sort of hoodoo work. And I believe you, as an Indian priest, are hep to the whole thing!"

The priest's face went livid, but his self control was admirable. He bowed profoundly, smiled graciously and turned to Payne.

"I can do neither the living nor the dead any service by remaining. My watch at the sacred shrine of Indra commences with the sunset. Therefore, I must be on my way."

Payne inclined his head.

"We had hoped you could help us in our trouble," he said, quietly. "Anyway, we thank you for coming. Let me offer you refreshments before you begin your return journey."

The priest stiffened and his face became convulsed with passion.

"No!" he cried sharply.

Then, as if ashamed of his rudeness, "I thank you," he said, "but a priest fasts more often than feasts. I cannot eat your food."

With this enigmatic remark he turned and plunged into the jungle.

That afternoon the body of Arnold was laid beside the other victims of the purple death.

A hopeless despondency settled over the camp. The laborers, sullen and brutish, went about their work in a spirit of insubordination. Nanah, their friend, was under the white men's displeasure. Therefore, they, in a body, resented it.

The temper of the whites, too, was on edge. The least overt act of the natives evoked a curse or a blow. Mutiny was in the air.

The night following Arnold's death the men sat hunched about the smudge fire. Sometimes they talked rapidly, disjointedly, about the tragedy. Again, for long periods, no one spoke.

The peculiar attitude of the priest gripped them. His assertion that fear, the poltroon's plea—had caused the deaths, angered them. His conversation lacked stability. After declaring fright had killed Arnold he, too readily, it seemed to the men, switched to the theory that Nanah had been instrumental in the crime.

"Allowing Nanah did kill them," suddenly voiced Hunt, "what in God's name did he do to scare them to death?"

No one answered. Each man was too busy conning the question: "Who will be next?"

Far into the night they sat. When, sick, body and soul, they retired, a double guard was patroling the camp.

For a month after the last death nothing occurred to mar the humdrum quiet of the camp. The guard, working in six hour tricks, neither heard nor saw anything suspicious. Therefore the whites, lulled by the treacherous security, dropped back into their former peaceful existence. There was, however, one exception. Dean never felt at ease. In moments of abstraction his finger always hovered about his mouth, always circled his lips.

One day a guard came hurriedly to Payne.

"Sirdar Payne," he began warily, "at sunrise today, as thy servant was watching the jungle to the east, thy servant thought he saw a face. It might be, Sirdar, that Nanah lurks about."

Payne knew, in his own mind, that the guard had not only seen Nanah but that he had held converse with him.

For a time the American smoked in silence. Then, removing the stem from between his teeth he said succinctly, "It might be. And it might be that Nanah is going to get his hide full of lead. We are desperate men, Augwa. And we are vigilant. We sleep on our arms. It might be that should Nanah learn this he will find other parts of India more to his liking."

Augwa bowed to the earth.

"It might be," he said.

Dean, upon learning of the Hindoo's return, became, in a measure, insane. For months he had been haunted by the overweening fears of the nameless horror. Six times he had viewed the grotesquely rigid bodies, the wide-open, staring eyes, the clenched hands of the men with whom he had slept, eaten, worked and played. Most hideous of all, six times his soul had been flayed by the livid, purple ring about the frozen mouth.

Captain Worthington, listening to Dean's ravings, cursed in his heart the venture that had led him and his comrades into the land of mystery. Out there in the lurid sunshine were six rock-heaped mounds, covered softly by the snowy blossoms of the monkey-bread trees. At a distance Payne, Hunt, Brown and Carson were standing, dejectedly looking at the row of graves. Inside the tent Dean, chained like a dog, cursed and fought imaginary Nanahs.

It was terrible.

Worthington's heart ached for the living man more acutely than for the dead. They could not feel, while Dean, racked by fear, suffered the tortures of the damned.

No one expected to sleep in camp that night. Nanah was near. As they valued their lives they meant to stay awake.

Wearily the hours dragged. Eventually the rosy pink of dawn crep across the sky. Cicades hushed their strident clamor, vampire bats winged their zigzag homeward way. Birds awoke twittering and singing. Day dawned and Nanah, the terrible, had not struck.

A week passed and, as nothing had occurred to disturb the every-day routine of the camp, vigilance relaxed.

Nanah had taken Payne's hint and decamped.

Wearily the men sought their cots. The day had been exacting, sultry, filled with accidents and mishaps.

As the night settled down a holy calm seemed to envelop the camp. Far, far away, stars twinkled brightly in the velvety blackness of the great dome overhead. From the tents came the regular breathing of sleeping, work-wearied men.

The guard changed. The moon, now at the fag end of the last quarter, slipped up out of the vastness and hung, a tiny red-gold thread, in the sky.

The men on guard were tired. They, too, had done their bit in the sand beds. A turbaned head dropped, jerked back, sank again until the chin lay upon the black, full-muscled chest. Morpheus, with silent fingers, pressed down the weary lids. The camp slept.

Payne awoke suddenly. A weight, warm, palpitant, was on his breast. A rhythmic murmer flowed and eddied about him. A peculiar sensation, as though something was compressing his chest, oppressed him. A hot flame seemed scorching his face, a searing circle burned about his lips, his breath was leaving him. He tried to move, to shake off the crushing weight. But, above him gleamed two phosphorescent flames chaining his will, subjugating him to the Thing until he could not stir.

He tried, then, to scream. To shout. To cast the hideous incubus from him. But by some hypnotic power the Thing overruled his soul, clung tenaciously.

The myalgia in his muscles was excruciating. In his agony Payne began drawing up his knees, gripping his fists. And his eyes, mesmerized and held by the glowing green flame above him, opened wider, wider, until the balls seemed bursting from the sockets.

His lungs, like a top balloon from which the air is squeezed, collapsed. His breath became the merest flicker. He, like the six, was doomed. His last conscious thought was of the seventh grave beneath the monkey-bread tree.

Then came a roar and a blaze of light. A scream neither human nor animal but a blending of both.

Some time later Payne awoke. His body was a mass of aches; his lungs were a rack of pain; but he was alive. He knew he was because, as he moved, a turbaned head came into his line of vision. He could see the sun shining, could hear a low hum of voices. Yes, beyond a doubt, he was alive.

"Nanah," said Payne, with effort.

The boy came forward. His handsome face was aglow, his white teeth gleaming between his scarlet lips. "Beloved master," he cried ardently, "it is as though thou art returned from *Swarga!* As though thou wert given back from the grave."

He fell to kissing and weeping over Payne's hands.

Payne smiled weakly at what he

mentally styled the Hindoo's extravagant behavior.

"Guess I've been sick," he hazarded. "Must have been a little off. Touch of fever. Seems I had a dream. The Thing was on my breast. Sucking my breath like a cat. I can still feel the way its paws prodded up and down on my chest. Ugh! It was pretty awful. Glad it wasn't the truth. Queer, the tricks delirium plays."

Worthington, entering the tent, heard Payne's last remark.

"Yes, but, old dear, it wasn't delirium," he said lightly to cover his real emotion. "It was pure facts. Only for Nanah, God bless his darned old hide, you'd be filling the seventh grave today with every prospect auspicious for the number to go up to twelve."

Payne drew his aching body erect.

"The truth!" he cried, "Why man, it could not be!"

Worthington pushed his friend back on the cot, seated himself and struck match to pipe. When it was going good he answered Payne's protest.

"It both could be and was," he said soberly, "we have the answer to the puzzle. Nanah, here, because he is Indian, suspected something. But he, even, never came in a million miles of the truth. When Dean accused him of the crime he simply, to save his own skin as well as to have a free hand in working out the riddle, made himself scarce. Nanah knew that if suspicion once fastened on to him his chances of getting in the clear was about zero. So, logically, he took leg-bail, laid low, and saved you from being the seventh victim of the purple death."

Worthington stopped and mopped his brow. When he resumed his face was pale.

"The story has its inception in an event which occurred a year ago when some man, an explorer and curio-seeker, came into this part of the country. As I understood it the priests of the Temple of Indra have, there in the temple, a god called Indra. This, as all such heathen junk, is sacred in the sight of the devotees.

"But the curio-seeker determined to annex the god. One night he stole into the temple, shot the priest on guard, swiped the image and was making his getaway when two other priests surprised him. One he killed outright but the other, shot through the spine, became a paralytic.

"I am not sure as to the thief's fate. Anyway, he fell into the hands of the priests and, from what I've gotten from the blacks, I guess it was enough.

"The man whom the explorer shot lived for weeks. On one subject, he was violently insane. When he thought, which I guess was pretty much all the time, about white men, his whole desire was to kill. He, himself, was out of the running. The poisoned bullet had done its work well.

"It was not only of his own misfortune that he thought. The young priest on guard at the shrine of Indra that particular night was the paralytic's baby brother, a young chap who'd just taken orders. He was the first man murdered.

"You may imagine something of the helpless priest's agony of spirit. His kid brother dead, himself a paralytic. Hate and revenge seethed in his blood. His soul cried out for vengeance. Nothing but the lives of white men—not one only, but as many as his malignity could reach—would satisfy him.

"Obviously, he, in his condition, could do nothing. But, because of much brooding, he evolved an idea."

Payne held up his hand.

"What has all this—the god of Indra, the thieving explorer, the slain and maimed priests—to do with the murders here in camp and my own narrow escape, if, as you say, it was fact and not hallucination?"

"It does seem sort of rambling and far-fetching, doesn't it?" agreed Worthington, "But it all correlates. I have to lead up to the climax gradually. If I took it on high the chances are you'd think I was stepping on the gas!"

Nanah nodded.

"The Sidar is right," he said, "White men cannot understand Indian ways."

Worthington resumed.

"As the injured priest lay on his hard pallet in the palm-thatched hut he, because he was insane, devised one of the most diabolically clever plots a human's mind ever conceived.

"The kid brother whom he loved, even though priests are not supposed to love, had as a pet and companion a trained cheetah. This cat was exceptionally large. It was the sole witness to the brutal murder in the temple.

"The plan which matured in the mind of the stricken priest was horrible and unique. It was to have a part of the cheetah's brain removed and the diseased section of his own brain grafted in its place.

"At first the surgeon, the scoundrel we got to look at poor old Arnold, refused. But the paralytic was importunate. He pointed out that he must surely die. With his brain functioning in that of the animal, the work of revenge would go on as long as the cat lived. As the cheetah was less than a year old, the chances were good that it would secretly slay its tens, aye, its hundreds.

"The operation was performed. It was a success so far as the cheetah was concerned. But the priest died.

"The surgeon took the cheetah in hand. Talking to it he made it understand its mission. The hate cells of the priest's brain grew and functioned in the cat's head. Among the natives it was docile, gentle. But when it scented or saw a white man it became the prototype of the insane priest. The hate which had racked the man lashed the animal to fury.

"When we arrived on the scene the operation was three months old. The cat was perfectly recovered and ready for the test.

"The night of Borden's death the surgeon-priest, holding the cheetah in leash, crept up to camp. Everything was silent.

"Gloatingly the hell-fiend watched as Borden stirred, woke, sensed the presence of the creature upon his breast. With devilish joy he watched the cheetah as it laid foul lips to the mouth of its victim and sucked away his life.

"Enjoying the prospect of a long-drawn-out reign of terror the wretch called the cheetah, snapped back the chain and returned to the temple.

"You know the rest."

Great beads of perspiration were rolling down Payne's face. Vividly, as his friend talked, he re-lived the hideous experience of the night before.

Worthington knocked the dead ashes from his pipe.

"Only for Nanah, ever watchful, you'd—"

He broke off, abruptly.

Payne, wide-eyed, white and shaken gasped: "How did you learn all this?"

Sirdar Worthington's lips tightened, grimly.

"From the surgeon-priest, before he died. Nanah got the cheetah, but we got the priest."

He shrugged and changed the subject. "Old Dean's right as a trivet now that—"

Payne interrupted.

"What did you do with that damned hound?" he cried.

Worthington's gray eyes hardened.

"What did we do with him? What does it matter? Anyway, it wasn't nearly good enough for him!"

Nanah nodded a wise head.

"Where he is now, Sahib Payne, they do not perform surgical operations. There is too much heat!"

THE IMPOSTOR

By NORMAN SPRINGER

"HE WAS mad," said the doctor. "I drew up his will, to his dictation, the very day before—well, the day before it happened," said the lawyer, "and I insist that Philip Vallejo was as sane as you or I."

"Yes—the day before—"

"But you must admit the act was premeditated. Now that we regard them in the after-light, the terms of the will prove that he carefully planned the act. And, in addition, there is this document he left with me." The lawyer indicated a sealed envelope that lay upon the library table. "If he was mad when he shot himself, then he was mad when he dictated his will, when he handed me this envelope. Mad? Nonsense!"

"He must have been," muttered the doctor.

"What made him do it?" exclaimed the lawyer. "The cruelty of it! He must have known that to kill himself at such a time meant the death of his wife. The poor infant—"

"She did not learn of his suicide," stated the doctor. "I never told her."

"But—I thought the shock—her condition—"

"Her physical condition was excellent. No, it was not childbirth that took Mary's life."

"Then in heaven's name what was it?" cried the lawyer.

"It was—oh, it was stark insanity. Both of them were mad."

"What? Mary, too? Oh, come, come, Doctor!"

"It was madness—or it was the other thing," said the doctor, slowly. "And the other thing is impossible. It is quite impossible."

"What other thing?"

"Insanity is oftentimes difficult of detection, or of analysis when detected," was the evasive answer. "A mind may possess a well hidden insane spot, a single quirk, and be otherwise quite rational."

"You imply that Philip possessed such a spot? And Mary, too?"

"Yes. Or else—but the other thing is impossible."

"What other thing?"

The doctor was slow to answer. He leaned over the table that separated the chairs of the two men, and, with deliberation, chose a cigar from the humidor. He bit its end, and struck a match. When the stick flamed, his features, hitherto indistinct in the shaded light of the lawyer's study, were momentarily illumined. The lawyer saw marked agitation in a face usually serenely immobile. His companion was profoundly disturbed about something, and the lawyer was deeply impressed by this fact.

"There is no other thing," the doctor said, finally. "My use of the phrase was a slip of the tongue. In my opinion Philip and Mary were the victims of a singular insanity, of a terrible delusion their twisted minds held in common. You will learn about it later. But now —" He pointed to the envelope. "— let us get along with the business of this meeting."

The lawyer picked up the envelope and read aloud the inscription that covered its face: "To be opened after the death of Philip Vallejo, by the Executors of his Estate." Before he broke the seal, he held up the envelope to the other's view. "Of course, you recognize Philip's handwriting?" he said.

The doctor nodded. "Naturally. I, as well as you, was a guardian." The ghost of a smile hovered for an instant at the corners of his mouth. "There was a time when Philip's handwriting greeted me pretty regularly in my morning mail. When the young scamp was in college. He had the cheek to tell me once that I was easier to work than you." He leaned forward, and scrutinized the writing. "Philip's hand, without doubt. And yet—"

"And yet a little different from his college hand, eh?" commented the lawyer. "Bolder, firmer, more character in it, is it not so? How marriage changed the boy! Do you recall how worried we were when we learned that Mary had accepted him, and how sorry we were for her? He was such a lovable boy—and so weak. The pleasure-loving Californian blood, the old Spanish strain—an inherent weakness, I always thought. But the wedding—or perhaps it was that terrible experience of his wedding day—seemed to make a man of him quite suddenly. When he came out of the hospital, he seemed to me to have actually borrowed the positive, self-assertive character of that chum of his."

"Graves?" demanded the doctor, quickly.

"Yes, Chadwick Graves, 'Polly' Graves."

"Do you mean that Philip seemed to you to resemble young Graves, after the accident?"

"Resemble him? Of course not. Our dark, slender Spanish grandee resemble 'Polly' Graves! Do you remember what Graves looked like—squat, parrot-nosed, red-headed? Resemble him—well, hardly."

"I do not mean a physical resemblance," explained the doctor. "But a resemblance of—well, personality. You said—"

"I used young Graves to illustrate a point, nothing more. Because he possessed in such superlative degree those qualities of decision and firmness that Philip so conspicuously lacked before his marriage and so conspicuously owned afterward. Poor Graves. I never liked the young man, but I thought his death a great pity. I never encountered a stronger will. He had a career ahead of him. That boy knew what he wanted, and got it."

"He wanted Mary," said the doctor.

"Well, that was a pardonable failure, surely. 'Polly' Graves could hardly compete with our Philip in affairs of the heart. Philip's good looks and romantic tongue would outweigh in any girl's eyes the solid but invisible virtues Graves possessed. But Graves was a good loser; Philip's victory did not disturb their friendship."

The doctor nodded, musingly. "Yes, he was best man that day," he said. The lawyer waited a moment for further comment; then he forced his finger beneath the flap of the envelope.

"Just a moment before you break the seal," the doctor suddenly exclaimed. "Tell me, did Philip ever mention the accident to you?"

"No, and I never mentioned it to him," was the prompt response. "Philip appeared to avoid the subject. I respected his reticence, because I knew how close was their friendship, and how keenly he must feel his friend's death. In fact, I suspected Philip of brooding over the fatality."

The doctor stiffened in his chair. "Brooding, eh? Now, why should you suspect him of brooding? His eyes, perhaps? A certain expression—"

"My friend, I practise the art of cross-examination for a living," the other interrupted, a slight annoyance in his voice. "I know just what you are after. You have decided that the verdict must be insanity, and you wish my evidence to confirm the verdict. But I tell you again—in my opinion Philip was not mad. Indeed, ever since his marriage he seemed to me to be extraordinarily sane. When I say I suspected him of brooding over his friend's death, I mean, not that he exhibited any eccentricity of manner or appearance, but merely that there was about him at times an air of sadness that seemed not to belong to a young man newly and happily married."

The doctor leaned back in his chair. "Well—break the seal," he said.

THE lawyer glanced up from the typewritten sheets he had drawn from the envelope and spread upon the table. His air was puzzled.

"But this is not Philip's—" he began, and stopped short when he thought he detected a sardonic light in the other's eyes. "I do not know what you expected, but I thought the envelope would contain Philip's explanation of his rash act. But, apparently—" He left the sentence uncompleted, and stared at the paper under his hand.

"Apparently it contains Chadwick Graves' explanation?" ventured the doctor.

"Eh!" exclaimed the lawyer, startled. "Now, how—but apparently it does. Here is a title in capitals at the head of the writing, and it says, 'The Confession of Chadwick Graves.' I don't understand—what can a man more than a year dead have to do with last week's tragedy?"

"Read on. You will understand," counseled the doctor.

The lawyer read aloud in his clipped professional voice:

"'I am writing these lines on the night of April 11th, 1922. They are for the instruction and enlightenment of Doctor Morton and Judge Cumberland, the executors of Philip Vallejo's estate. To them this confession is addressed.

"'The facts I relate are incredible; but you must believe them. You must believe that Chadwick Graves writes this message, although his body has lain in its grave for a year and a month. You must believe that Philip Vallejo died upon his wedding day, although his flesh continued to live, another man's dwelling.'

"'Great heavens, this is sheer lunacy!" cried the lawyer.

"Ah—yes?" murmured the doctor.

Abruptly the lawyer resumed reading.

"'For the first and only time in my life, I, Chadwick Graves, acknowledge defeat. Tomorrow I shall adjust my affairs—or rather, I shall adjust Philip Vallejo's affairs—and then I shall end an imposture which has become intolerable to me, and which is killing my—no, Vallejo's wife. As for the child—if it lives, I beg of you gentlemen that you act toward it as she, whom I have so cruelly wronged, direc!s.

"'It is for her sake that I make this confession. It is for her sake that day after tomorrow I make an end of myself. What is done cannot be undone, but my act, I trust, will bring her peace, and drive the horror from her eyes. I cannot continue to live. I have failed. I deceived the world, but not Mary. I cannot compel her love. She knows me. She sees me through my mask of Philip's flesh.

"'All my life I have loved Mary Varnady. I hated Philip Vallejo. Not because he had all that I lacked—wealth, physical beauty, a personality that won affection—I cared little for these things. I had brains and will-power, and he was putty in my hands. In school, in college, in business, I used Vallejo to advance my prospects. I confess this frankly and without shame. I used him because he was necessary to my advancement. I did not hate him because he was a weakling; I merely despised his weakness. I hated him with a deep, abiding, ever-growing hatred because he was the obstacle between me and Mary Varnady.

"'I loved her, and she loved Philip. Me she disliked, and endured only because I was Philip's shadow. Him she loved, and for long the fool never knew it.

"'I kept him blind to her love, and charm. I kept him amused with other women. I encouraged his dissipations; I even arranged them. But Mary's will matched my own in strength. She compelled his attention. He became her devoted slave, her betrothed, and I was helpless.

"'Can you realize what it meant to a man of my temperament? Can you imagine the furious envy that consumed me? The distrait nights, the days of self-torture? God—the agony of spirit I endured! It was during the period of their engagement that I began to wish myself Philip Vallejo. Can you appreciate that? I wished with all the force of my mind that I were this pretty weakling who had Mary Varnady's love. I wished that I were actually he.

"'I hid my fury. I deceived the world, and Philip—but not Mary. I could see her knowledge in her eyes. She feared me, hated me. That was my one ray of comfort. Even her hatred was better than her indifference.

"'Since I was Philip's best friend, I was best man at the wedding. Immediately following the ceremony, we carried through a program Philip had carefully planned. He and Mary wished to elude the congratulations, the rice and newspaper cameras, so the three of us slipped through the vestry door out into the side street where I had parked my car. Before the people in the church realized we were gone, I was racing them to the railway station.

"'Can you imagine my state as I drove through the streets that morning? Turmoil. Pain so keen my brain seemed skewered with hot pins. Rage so furious it seemed about to burst my body asunder. Longing, above all that longing. It had become an obsession during the last weeks. From the driving seat I could see, in the rear-sight mirror, the two of them in the seat behind. They sat with hands inter-clasped, like two children; and her eyes adored him. Oh, the longing that surged through me. It was an imperious desire. With mind and body, with every atom of my being, I longed to be Philip Vallejo.

"'I swung the car into the avenue which parallels the railway tracks. I was speeding. It seemed to help to go fast, and faster. I saw things through a mist—the street, the staring and gesticulating people, and a train coming toward me. Faster and faster I drove. The wind roared past me. Behind me Philip was shouting, but I ignored his voice. For I knew now what I must do.

"'As soon as I saw the train I knew I must do it. The law of my being compelled it. I was not born to survive defeat. That is why day after tomorrow—

"'A burst of light lay now upon my path, a great flame of light. It licked up the mist. Faster, faster, I drove. The car was a live thing beneath my hand, obedient to my will. A great joy surged in my breast, a cry of triumph was in my mouth. For I was about to wring victory from defeat.

"'I heard Mary shriek as I wrenched the steering wheel, and the car swerved from the road and plunged across the tracks. I saw the expression of dismay and fright upon the face in the car

window of the engine. Then a jar—it seemed not heavy—lights—darkness.

THE lawyer raised an agitated face. "My God, what fiendish—what ghastly—" He stuttered, and fumbled in his pocket, and presently was applying his handkerchief to his damp forehead.

"Remember the date line," said the doctor, sharply.

"Sh?"

"The accident was on the morning of March 9th, 1921; this document is dated April 11, 1922. It is in Philip's hand—"

"Yes, yes, of course, the dates—Philip's writing—I forgot. So circumstantial, so like Graves' egotism, that for a moment I—oh, but this is terrible, Doctor; why, Philip must have been as—"

"Ah—yes?"

The lawyer smothered his words in his handkerchief. Hurriedly, he recommenced the reading.

" 'The following item I set down because it is a possible explanation of how the thing took place. But I cannot vouch for its accuracy or truth, for in my own mind it is no more than a hazy half-memory. It may give Doctor Morton a clue. Perhaps it happened just as this half-memory tells me it did; perhaps this memory is merely a hospital-bred fantasy, and it happened in some other fashion. But happen it did. I am a living witness to that fact.

" 'I remember, then, that the darkness was not like any darkness I had ever known. It was the darkness of a space that contained nothing, absolutely nothing. Into this void I fell, or, rather, sank. The memory of the sensation is very clear; I sank into this darkness, slowly, softly, down, down, down, an immeasurable distance; no pain, and the only discomfort a slight feeling of suffocation.

" 'Abruptly, I passed through the bottom of this abyss, and was in light again. An extraordinary buoyancy was mine. I floated in a little cloud of mist; I, myself, was mist.

" 'I found myself looking down upon myself. Just beneath me was my body, the body of Chadwick Graves, lying twisted and broken upon the ground. I was free of it.

" 'I saw Philip lying there upon the ground. His body was not broken; it was unmarred. From between his slightly parted lips issued a tenuous spiral of mist; it spread about his body, became an aura, with its root in his mouth.

" 'I did not wish to re-enter my own hated body; but when I saw Philip lying there, I wished to enter his body. It had become a fixed habit to wish to be Philip Vallejo. The longing still possessed me. I did more than wish, I willed. With all my strength I willed. A force held me back. I struggled against it. I broke free of it, and I—that is, the mist that was I—floated slowly toward Philip's body.'

"But, Doctor, this is—"

"—A madman's dream."

"Yet, the particulars of the accident are so—so—"

"Naturally. Philip was there, wasn't he? And Graves did speed, and the machine did swerve into the path of the train. But recall the evidence upon which the coroner's jury based its verdict—the broken steering knuckle?"

"Yes, yes, certainly. And—I know Philip was supposed to have escaped any injury, but—"

"Exactly. He escaped any visible injury, but—"

"Just what occurred in the smash-up, Doctor? I know you reached the scene almost immediately after the tragedy occurred."

"It was altogether a most miraculous—no, no, I don't mean that word, I mean it was a very freakish accident. The automobile was completely demolished. Philip and Mary had been tossed clear of the engine at the instant of impact; she was only slightly bruised, and had not even been rendered unconscious; he lay stunned—it was 36 hours, you recollect, before he came to—but there was not a scratch or bruise upon his body. A marvelous escape. But poor Graves was dead. He had died instantly; a glance told me that. His body was shockingly mutilated."

"Lying twisted and broken upon the ground," murmured the lawyer.

"What's that? Come now, you don't intend to hint—"

"No, I don't. But, about Philip—it is your theory, I take it, that, although he escaped visible injury, his mind—"

"—was permanently unsettled by the terrific shock," finished the doctor. "It is more than a theory; it is a decision. He was insane, or—the other—"

"Impossible!" stated the lawyer, decisively.

" 'I awakened with a full consciousness of my own identity. I was myself, I was Chadwick Graves. I looked up and saw Mary standing by my side, gazing down at me. I was in bed, in a hospital room, I learned afterward, and Doctor Morton and a nurse were also present. But them I did not directly see, for I had eyes only for Mary.

" 'She regarded me with an expression so tender, so full of love and entreaty, that my heart all but stopped beating. She, whose eyes at sight of me had always betrayed dislike and fear, was regarding me with eyes of love. She was looking at me as I had seen her look at Philip.

" 'I thought she was looking at Philip. I thought she must be looking beyond me, toward some spot where Philip was lying. The memory of the accident rushed upon me, a wild confusion of images. I tried to lift my head, to lift my body; I said, "Where is he?"

" 'A cry came from Mary's lips, a cry of joy. I was pressed back, her arms were about me, her soft lips touched mine.

" 'The shock of that contact, the ecstasy that thrilled me, my incredulous astonishment—oh, you cannot guess what I felt! My mind was a-whirl; giant fingers squeezed my heart until the pain—or the joy—was almost unbearable. For Mary Varnady kissed me upon the mouth!

" 'She was withdrawn, and Doctor Morton bent over me. "You are quite all right, my boy," said he. "Not a scratch. But—no excitement, you must be quiet. Sleep now. Close your eyes."

" 'I closed my eyes. I was glad to, for I was fighting for my self-control. I was repressing an impulse to leap from the bed and dance, to scream, to in some physical way express the turmoil within me.

" 'A door closed, and, somewhat composed, I opened my eyes to find myself alone in the room. I sniffed the air, the odorous hospital air upon which lingered, I fancied, a faint breath of Mary. I licked my lips; I fancied I could taste her. Then, moving in the bed, I thought of myself, and felt of myself. Apparently I was uninjured—not a bandage, not a pain. But my mind was chaos. A voice in my brain was chanting, "Mary, Mary, Mary! Why, Why, Why!"

" 'It was some time before I noticed the hand lying upon the bed-spread. It was not my hand. My hand was short and square and red, and back of it was covered with a red fuzz that matched the hair on my head. This hand I observed was small and narrow and gracefully proportioned, the fingers were long and tapering, and there was not a hair upon the white skin. There was a topaz ring upon the third finger that I instantly recognized. Indeed, I instantly recognized the hand itself. I recognized

it with a shock. It was his hand—Philip's hand.

"'I sat up in bed. To my amazement, when I moved my arm this hand—Philip's hand—moved in obedience. I held it up before my eyes, and gaped at it. Slowly I realized that it was my hand, that it was my arm, my body—and yet, something was changed, something was different. Dismay, horror, a terrible fear I was mad took possession of me. I gazed about the bare walls of the room, and noticed a dressing table and mirror in a corner. I got out of bed and went toward it, and so afraid was I of something—I knew not what—it took all my courage to look in the glass.

"'I, Chadwick Graves looked in the mirror. Philip Vallejo looked out of the mirror.

"'I was not there. He was there. When I grimaced in the glass, he mimicked me. When I moved my arms, he moved his. When I breathed, he breathed. I was Philip!

"'I nearly swooned when I comprehended. Indeed, I did not at once comprehend. I fell upon the bed and lay there with clenched fists, fighting back the madness that seemed about to overwhelm me. I was he! I was in his body!

"'As I lay there, I began to remember, very dimly and hazily, the thing I have recounted above, the thing that occurred immediately after the accident. I began to understand the amazing thing that had happened.

"'When I understood, my fear was laid. I knew I was not mad. More than that, I knew that I was victor. The sense of triumph was mine. I, the despised and rejected, was victor! The man who loved Vallejo's wife, had become, through some freak of fate, the tenant of Vallejo's body!

"'The humor in the situation struck me, and I began to laugh. I could not help it. Once started, I could not stop. I laughed shrilly, hysterically.

"'Suddenly Doctor Morton was bending over me again, an alarmed expression in his face. I felt the needle in my arm, and immediately I drifted off into sleep.'

"An explosion of nerves," the doctor replied to the lawyer's inquiring glance. "Hysterical reaction to shock, you know—I was expecting and watching for it. But this other—this delusion—I did not then have the faintest suspicion—"

"Poor lad. Ah—well—"

"'I began my new life in a high and confident spirit. We left the hospital together, and walked hand in hand down the long steps. I was happier than ever before in my life. What more could I desire of Fortune? I had the woman I loved, and Vallejo's wealth and proud place in the world.

"'We motored down to the old Vallejo ranch in Monterey. At Mary's request (to which I gladly agreed) the long wedding trip planned by Philip was abandoned. It was no wish of mine to rush my bride about the world. The quiet country life, where I might enjoy to the full the unexpected favor of the gods, was much more to my liking.

"'My happiness, the glorious sense of triumph, endured during the whole of the ride to Monterey. I did not guess—but how could I guess? We had not yet been alone together; our contacts had been no more than a meeting of eyes, a touching of hands, a kiss stolen beneath the eyes of onlookers. My avid, doting love blinded me to any possible danger. And yet, if had I sensed danger, what could I have done? It was not a tangible peril that threatened.

"'The warning, the shadow, came the very first moment we were alone together in the Monterey house. The maid closed the door upon us; eagerly I opened my arms, and as eagerly she responded to the gesture. For the first time I held her in close embrace.

"'She trembled in my arms. It was a movement of repulsion, a shudder. Her warm lips that had just sought mine so hungrily became cold and unresponsive. She drew back and looked up into my face; and deep down in her questioning eyes I saw a formless, groping terror.

"'"What—what is it?" she said.

"'She did not know what it was. But I knew. Her mind had no doubt, but her heart, her soul, had detected a difference.

"'I laughed it off. I pressed her to me again, and had the exquisite delight of rekindling the ardor in her eyes. She cooed and crooned in my arms. But, somehow, there was a difference. Our communion was incomplete, for a shadow had come between us. Philip's shadow.

"'She did not see the shadow, but I saw it. And I knew, down in my heart, that my triumph was a fool's triumph.

"'But I would not admit this, even to myself. I was drunk with love. I steeped myself in love. I loved madly, blindly, with all my heart and soul, with all my power, and for a time my love seemed sufficient. The very strength of my emotion swept Mary along with me. The shadow dwindled; it disappeared—almost.

"'And then one night Mary's voice awakened me. The room was filled with moonlight, and she was sitting up in bed staring out through the window at the sky. The words she spoke, the words that awakened me, were, "What is it? Philip—what is it?"

"'I answered her, and she clutched my shoulder with a nervous, frightened clasp. She switched on the light, and peered into my face, into my eyes. And in her eyes I saw again that strange expression, that formless, groping terror. It was not so deeply buried this time.

"'Afterward, she wept upon my breast. "I thought I heard you calling me," she sobbed. "And Philip, you were far—oh, far away!"

"'After that night the shadow never left us. It had come between us like the thin edge of a wedge, and daily the wedge was driven deeper, and the rift was widened. I cannot explain in clear terms the pain and disillusion of the following months. It was not that we drifted apart; we were forced apart. By something nameless. By Philip's shadow. Oh, I cannot explain the thing, the invisible Thing, that surrounded us always when we were together, and caused that expression to come into her eyes whenever she looked at me.

"'Her mind could not detect the counterfeit, but her heart knew there was a difference. *He* possessed her heart. Every day her heart clamored louder against the impostor. Her heart informed her flesh against me; it made her shudder with distaste of my arms, shrink from my kisses; it made her distrait, unhappy. She could not understand what it was. But I understood. Philip's shadow, Philip's voice whispering in her heart. And I was powerless to hold her.

"'I have lived a million years in the past few months, a million years of pain, of the dull agony of waiting, waiting for the inevitable to happen, a million years of torturing jealousy.

"'It was the new life forming and stirring beneath her heart that gave Mary a true vision at last. From the depths of my wretchedness I grasped at any straw in hope of salvation; and hence I forced maternity upon Mary, hoping that a child—my child—would banish the shadow and draw her to me.

"'It was not salvation, it was disaster. The unborn babe breathed my secret into its mother's consciousness.

"'Two mornings ago, we were sitting opposite each other at breakfast. Suddenly Mary gave an exclamation, a half-choked scream, and leaped to her feet. My startled glance informed me it was the end. She knew me! That strange expression was in her face. The terror in her eyes was no longer formless, grop-

ing; it was full grown, it leaped out at me, it was terror of me. She knew!

"'"You are—stirring your coffee like—like—" she cried.

"'She did not finish the sentence. The accusation, really. There was no need. She knew. She rushed from the room, an expression of unutterable horror in her face—and I cowered in my chair, helpless, tongue-tied.

"'It was the end. It was defeat, final defeat. I cannot survive defeat. And so I have been setting Philip's affairs in order. When everything is settled, day after tomorrow—well—

"'I have not seen Mary since that hour. I know I shall never see her again. She remains immured in her rooms, and only Doctor Morton and the servants may see her. Her time is close, her hour of trial which I have imposed upon her. My despised love devours me, and thoughts of Mary are hot needles in my brain. But I shall not approach her again. I could not bear it—to see again in her eyes that awful terror and loathing of me.

"'What I have done I cannot undo. But I can undo myself.'"

"Well?" said the doctor.

"I am overcome," confessed the lawyer. "The poor boy. Why, Philip was—"

"Insane, eh?"

"Absolutely! It shows in nearly every sentence of this—this confession, as his cracked mind conceived it. Insane, and yet he seemed so rational. I, who saw him nearly every day, did not suspect. But apparently you suspected—the delusion, I mean. You said—"

"I guessed it—that is all. I could not be certain. I treated Mary for nerves, a mild hysteria consequent upon her condition. Due to that and nothing more, I was sure. But from what happened after the baby came—the manner in which Mary behaved—well, I guessed it."

"The manner in which Mary behaved," mused the lawyer. "And you hinted that she also—in fact, you said so. Have you concealed something from public knowledge? Did Mary also—er—undo herself?"

"No. That is, not exactly. Mary simply quit."

"Eh? Quit?"

"Yes, quit. Quit living. Gave up the fight. When we brought her son to her."

"In heaven's name, explain."

The doctor drummed upon the table for a long moment before he replied. Then he spoke almost with reluctance, and in broken sentences.

"Now, understand—this does not alter my decision in the case. It is just a—well, a freak, an atavism, a throwback in the ancestral stream. Nothing else. Unless—perhaps the exploded theory of pre-natal influence is not so exploded after all. Mary's mental state, you know. But—understand—it is not the other thing, not the—impossible.

"Whichever of the first two it is—well, the features of Mary's baby were extraordinarily well developed, even at birth. And the resemblance (quite accidental, I am certain, mind you) was unmistakable. Red hair. Parrot nose. The child was a miniature, so to speak, of Chadwick Graves."

Force of Imagination

THERE was in the Hospital of Incurables at Paris, a young man, an ideot from his birth, whose body was broken in the same places in which criminals are broken. He lived near twenty years in that condition: many persons saw him, and the queen mother making a visit to that hospital, had the curiosity not only to see, but even to touch the arms and legs of this youth, in the places where they were broken. The cause of this unhappy accident was soon found to be, that the mother while big with child, was present at the execution of a malefactor, who was broken alive on a cross, with an iron bar. That she was excessively terrified, it is easy to believe; but how the force of her imagination could produce such an effect on the foetus is a matter of great difficulty. Mallebranche attempts to account for it, in his usual manner, by ingenious conjectures, saying, that the imaginary faculty is a certain inward sensation, which is entirely performed by the assistance of the animal spirits; that the foetus ought to be deemed a part of the mother's body, so that whatever part of the mother suffers, by some occult communication, transmitted to the same part of the foetus; wherefore, when the pregnant woman was shocked at that dreadful sight, possibly she suffered pain, and even some degree of laceration of the fibres, in the same limbs which she saw broken in the malefactor; but as her bones were firm and solid, they were capable of resisting the shock, whereas those of the foetus, being scarce knit, were easily broken, so as never to unite again. But whether this reasoning be just or not, the fact is a manifest proof, that the imagination has a wonderful degree of power to affect the body.

Immolation of Human Beings

IN the kingdom of the Ashantees, in Africa, (forming, it is supposed, a population of about a million, and possessing a disposable force of 150,000 men), the prevalence of this horrible rite exists to an appalling extent: an authentic communication recently received, states that it forms a leading feature in all their great festivals, some of which occur every 21 days, and that no fewer than 100 victims are sacrificed at each. Besides these, there are sacrifices at the death of every person of rank, more or less bloody, according to their dignity; on the death of his mother, the king butchered no fewer than 3,000 victims. The funeral rites of a great captain were repeated weekly for three months, and nearly 400 persons were slaughtered. At the funeral of a person of rank, it is usual to wet the grave with the blood of a freeman of respectability: all the retainers of a family are present, and the heaps of all the victims being deposited in the bottom of the grave, several are unsuspectingly called out to assist in placing the coffin, and just as it rests on the heads or skulls, a slave from behind stuns one of these freemen by a violent blow, followed by a deep gash in the back-part of the neck, and he is rolled in on the top of the body, and the grave instantaneously filled up. Here is another affecting illustration of the Scripture truth, "The dark habitations of the earth are full of cruelty."

A Series of Articles by SEABURY QUINN

WEIRD CRIMES

No. 6. The Werewolf of St. Bonnot

THE long European twilight was dying, and darkness crept stealthily across the fields and pasture lands as three horsemen trotted slowly along the forest road of St. Bonnot. Two of the riders carried lutes slung across their shoulders, which marked them as trouveurs—ballade singers—while the third rode slightly to the rear, balancing a portmanteau on his saddle bow, by which token he was labeled attendant of the other two. All three jangled long swords from their hips, for France was under the reign of the weak and vacillating Charles IX, and he who would bring his life and property safely to his journey's end must needs travel prepared to defend them.

" 'S'wounds," swore one of the minstrels, drawing his scarlet cloak more tightly about his shoulders, "but this abominable wood is colder than the tomb of the blesséd Louis! With winter a good two moons away, methinks this chill i' the air hath more o' the Devil's flavor than of God's good weather."

His companion grunted a reply and sunk his chin deeper in his tippet. The speaker looked right and left at the pale, new moonlight sifting eerily between the tree trunks, and continued, "A flagon of the Count's wine would like me well enough the now. What with a twenty-mile ride, and no provender for man or beast along the way, I'd sing of Alexander the Greek and Arthur the Briton from now till sunup for a single stoup of wine and a morsel of bread and cheese."

Again an inarticulate reply from his mate.

" 'S'death," the conversationally inclined singer went on, "didst ever see such a lonesome, uncanny place as this accursed *bois?* Methinks *Monsieur Loup-Garou* himself would like no better place for his questing."

He flung back his bearded chin with a ringing laugh and began the opening lines of *Bisclaveret* in a deep baritone. The poem, one of France's oldest, dealt with "the multitudinous herd not yet made fast in hell"—the people of the loup-garou, or werewolf, who had sold their souls to the devil in return for the power of transforming themselves into wolves, to kill and devour their enemies. All Europe trembled at the very name of these men-monsters, but no country was more plagued by them than France.

"Hush, hush, Henri!" the taciturn minstrel suddenly broke his silence as the singer expanded the theme of his terrible song. "*Pour l'amour de le bon Dieu,* cease that singing. Suppose a werewolf *were* in this twenty-times-damned wood—" he glanced fearfully among the shadows—"we should all be torn to bits!"

"Bah!" the other replied. "The *loup-garou* would be lucky if I did not eat *him,* famished as I am.

"*Hola,* Monsieur Werewolf," he cried mockingly, "come out of the forest. Come out and be eaten by the hungriest song-singer who ever kissed a tavern wench or drank a gallon of Burgundy at a draught!"

It was as if his challenge had been waited for. From a low clump of bracken beside the road rose such a marrow-freezing howl as no man had heard before, and a huge, gray, shaggy form, larger than any wolf that ever fought a pack of hounds, launched itself straight at the astonished trouveur's throat.

The horses reared in sudden terror, plunging futilely to beat off his assailant. "*A moi,* Louis; *a moi,* Francois. Quick, for the love o' God, or I perish!"

But the other singer and the servant could give no aid. Encumbered by their cloaks and trappings, their horses plunging and rearing in panic fear, they could but fight desperately to retain their saddles and cry supplications to the Virgin.

"Help, help!" the attacked man called again, then, with a shout of desperation, he fell from his saddle, the great, gray thing's teeth fastened in his shoulder near the base of his neck.

For a moment he thrashed among the underbrush, unable to draw his long sword and powerless to thrust back the creature with his bare hands. In the struggle his hand brushed against the hanger in his girdle. He dragged the short cut-and-thrust blade from its scabbard with frantic haste and struck once, twice, three times at the foul creature snarling at his throat. A cry of rage and pain sounded amid the monster's growling, and with a deep, angry bay it rushed off into the forest depths.

"*Mon Dieu!*" gasped the minstrel as he regained his saddle. "Would that I'd heeded thy warning, Louis. Never again will I challenge one of those tailless hounds from the Devil's kennel. Tomorrow morning, if it please our Lady we see the light of another day, this matter goes before my Lord Duke. Holy Church and the secular government must combine to rid the province of these changeling wolves."

The three riders set spurs to their mounts, nor did they slacken rein till safe within the fortifications of the city of Dôle.

NEXT morning the two singers and their lackey appeared before the provincial officials and made formal complaint that they had been set upon, and one of them all but killed, by a *loup-garou,* or werewolf, in the forest of St. Bonnot.

The officials looked grave when they had heard the complainants through. This was not the first account of werewolf depredations to come before them. Farmers living in the territory contiguous to the city had brought in accounts of sheep stolen from the fold at dead of night, of dogs killed as they watched the flocks, even of little children found dead and horribly mangled along the roadside and beneath the hedges. Now came these three wayfarers, all of them veterans of the wars, and two of them men of learning and respect, to tell of being boldly attacked on the royal road as they journeyed through the wood. This thing must not be. The "power of the country" must be raised, and the werewolf, or werewolves, responsible for the outrages sent forthwith to the fiery hell where their master, the Devil, waited the coming of their forfeited souls.

France of 1573 was in no condition to police her country districts. The long and devastating wars between Huguenots and Catholics had made a sort of no man's land of large districts; Charles IX, the king, was a man of wax, molded now by this favorite, now that, and giving no thought to the welfare of his people. Every available sou that taxation could wring from rich or poor was spent to gratify or further the ambitions of the most corrupt and conscienceless politician who ever debased a government, the Queen Mother, Catherine de Medici.

In these circumstances, the Court of Parliament at Dôle might pass as many enactments as it chose, but, lacking force with which to make its mandates effective, its acts were but mere scraps of unavailing paper. One power still remained to the court. This was a *levee en masse*—a general calling to arms of the countryside.

Tradesmen and residents of the towns of those days stood bareheaded when titled swaggerers rode forth, and the agricultural classes were little more important to the nobility than the earth they tilled. For one not holding a patent of nobility to engage in the gentlemanly sport of hunting was to court immediate and merciless punishment. Game must be preserved for the nobles to hunt, though the peasant's stomach went empty and his flocks and herds were depleted by wolves till poverty crushed him to the ground.

Now was a chance to declare an "open season," give the peasants the thrill of engaging in the noble pastime of the chase, rid the country of the dreaded werewolves and save the sorely needed public funds, all at once. Accordingly, the following proclamation was issued by the Court of Parliament at Dôle:

"According to the advertisement made to the sovereign Court of Parliament at Dôle, that in the territories of Epagny, Salvange, Courchapon and the neighboring villages has often been seen and met, for some time past, a werewolf, who, it is said, has already seized and carried off several little children, so that they have not been seen since, and since he has attacked and done injury to divers horsemen in the country, who kept him off only with great difficulty and danger to their persons and liv[illegible], the said Court, desiring to prevent any greater danger, has permitted, and by these presents does hereby permit all those who are now abiding and dwelling in said places and others, notwithstanding all and any edicts concerning the chase, to assemble with pikes, halberts, arquebuses and other weapons, to chase and to pursue the said werewolf in every place where they may find him; to seize him, to tie him, or, if necessary, to kill him without incurring any pains or penalties of any sort, kind or nature whatsoever.

"Given at the convocation of the said Court on the Thirteenth Day of the month of September, 1573."

Mounted heralds were despatched throughout the territory adjacent to Dôle, and within a few days the court's proclamation was known to every dweller in the vicinity.

Soon quaint processions were seen issuing from all the villages in the neighborhood. Headed by their parish priests, with sacred statues borne before them, the people sallied forth to hunt down the dreaded *loup-garou*. Solemn high mass had been sung, the weapons of the huntsmen had been formally laid in the chancels of their churches and blessed by the *curés;* and now the hunt commenced.

Separating into parties of two, the peasants ranged the fields and woods, seeking everywhere for their accursed prey. It must be admitted that many of them had no stomach for their task, and would have dropped their weapons and fled incontinently at the first sight of anything resembling a werewolf in the most remote way. Others so far forgot the sacred and official duty with which they were charged as to devote themselves to the hunting of edible game, and many a luckless bunny found its way into the pouches (and later to the kettles) of the werewolf hunters. Still others routed forest wolves from their lairs and killed them, so not a few wolves' scalps were brought before the provincial authorities.

But these were all natural wolves, as incapable of assuming human shape as the peasants were of becoming wolves, and, though their deaths doubtless added greatly to the safety of the neighborhood sheepfolds, they brought the werewolf menace no nearer a termination than when the Court of Parliament first issued its proclamation.

Interest in the hunt began to slacken. The peasants had their farmlets to attend, and the great landed proprietors were heartily sick of having their game preserves raided by those supposedly bent on public service. Except among those who had lost children or sheep, the *loup-garou* became little more than a hazy recollection.

And then suddenly, unexpectedly, he was found. On the eighth of November, 1573, when the fields were all but bare of vegetation and the last leaves were reluctantly parting company with the trees, three laborers, hurrying from their work to their homes at Chastenoy by a woodland short-cut, heard the screams of a little girl issuing from a dense tangle of vines and undergrowth. And with the child's screams mingled the baying of a wolf.

Swinging their stout billhooks, cutting a path for themselves through the tangled wildwood, the laborers hastened toward the sounds. In a little clearing they beheld a terrifying sight. Backed against a tree, defending herself with a shepherd's crook, was a ten-year-old girl, bleeding from a half-dozen wounds, while before her was a monstrous creature which never ceased its infernal baying and howling as it attacked her, tooth and nail.

As the peasants ran forward to the child's rescue the thing fled off into the forest on all fours, disappearing almost instantly in the darkness. The men would have followed, but the child demanded all their attention, for, weakened by loss of blood and exhausted with terror, she fell fainting before they could reach her.

The child was carried home and the workmen reported their adventure to the authorities. Their astonishment had been too great and the night too dark for them to make accurate observations, so there was a conflict in their testimony. Two affirmed the thing possessed the body of a wolf, the third swore positively it was a man, and, what was more to the point, *he recognized him.*

The clerical authorities cast their vote with the peasants, asserting the child's assailant a wolf, and there the matter rested for a time.

ON the fourteenth of the month the disappearance of a little boy about eight years old was reported. The child had last been seen within an arrow's flight of the gates of Dôle, yet he had vanished as completely as though swallowed by the earth.

Now the civil authorities decided on action. They were not inclined to discount the werewolf theory entirely, for to deny the existence of such monsters in those days was treading dangerously close to the skirts of heresy. But neither were they minded to overlook any clue which pointed a natural explanation to the mystery. The Frenchman is curiously logical and direct, even in matters of superstition.

Two days after the little boy's disappearance was reported, a *sergeant de*

ville set out from Dôle, armed with a writ of attachment and a very business-like sword, and accompanied by six stalwart arquebusiers. Guided by the peasant who claimed to have recognized the little girl's assailant, the party hastened through the forest of St. Bonnot to the home of one Gilles Garnier, which stood beside the banks of a woodland tarn not far from the village of Arnanges.

Gilles Garnier, the man they sought, was a sombre, ill-favored fellow, surly and taciturn. He walked with a pronounced stoop and a shuffling gait, looking neither to right nor left, and usually muttering half crazily to himself. His pale face, repulsive features and livid complexion repelled all advances from those who met him, and little was known of his personal habits. But because of his long, unkempt beard, his filthy and ragged clothing (uncleanliness was next to godliness in those days) and his solitary life, he was popularly known as the hermit of St. Bonnot.

This title, however, carried with it no implication of sanctity. Quite the reverse. Persons with property to lose were wont to lock it up securely when the hermit was known to be in the vicinity, and many a hen roost owed its depreciated population to his evening visits.

The hermit's hut was as dilapidated as its tenant. Its crude roof was made of squares of sod laid across rickety rafters, and its walls of uncemented stones, irregularly piled one upon another, were encrusted with lichen. The floor was of trodden clay and the rough timber door hung crazily on hinges of rawhide. The windows were unglazed, and stopped against the weather with aprons of untanned skins.

The sergeant deployed four of his half-dozen followers in an enveloping movement about the hut, while, accompanied by the remaining two and his guide, he approached the hut and knocked thunderously on its sagging door with the hilt of his sword.

"Who calls?" Gilles Garnier peered evilly from a window.

"I do," the sergeant answered. "Open in the name of the law!"

"What seek ye here?" the hermit parleyed.

"I seek thee, accursed of God—werewolf, slayer of little children," the officer replied. "Come forth and yield ye, or, by'r Lady, I'll come in for thee."

Gilles Garnier bared his long, yellow teeth in an ugly snarl and hunched his rounded shoulders as if to spring upon the messenger of justice, but a second look at the arquebusiers showed him the futility of resistance.

The arquebus was grandfather to the flintlock musket of Revolutionary days, and great-great-grandfather to the modern rifle. It was nearly as tall as a man, had a bore larger than the modern twelve-gauge shotgun, and was fired by its bearer thrusting a glowing fuse, or gun-match, into a touchhole at its breech. Even with the inferior gunpowder of those days it had a range twice that of the strongest crossbow, and though it was anything but accurate in aim, it carried a charge of leaden slugs and broken nails which scattered almost over a half-acre lot. If one of the soldiers had opened fire at point-blank range, Gilles Garnier would have been mangled almost beyond human recognition.

Gilles Garnier thought it prudent to come out and surrender.

His arms and legs firmly manacled, an iron chain about his neck binding him fast to the sergeant's stirrup, the werewolf of St. Bonnot was brought to Dôle.

FOR a time there was a controversy whether state or ecclesiastical courts should take jurisdiction. The clerics maintained that the prisoner had committed his crimes in the form of a wolf, and, since he had sold his soul to the Devil in order to become a werewolf, it was a matter cognizable only in the courts spiritual.

The civil authorities declared it had not yet been proven that the accused had committed any crime, and so, if he had committed any, whether as man or beast, it followed he must be tried before the temporal courts.

The civil lawyers won and the trial commenced.

Witnesses were summoned to prove the deaths of children and the condition in which their bodies were found; shepherds appeared to tell of their missing sheep; the two minstrels and their servant told of the attack made on them the previous September.

The little maid rescued by the peasants identified the prisoner positively as her assailant, and showed the court the scars left by his teeth and nails.

Then came the examination of the prisoner. In anticipation of his claims to innocence, a choice collection of racks, thumbscrews, leg-crushers and branding irons was made ready, and the official torturers looked forward to a busy morning. But the prisoner not only confessed all the crimes charged against him, but volunteered information concerning a number of others unknown to the court.

On the last day of Michaelmas (September 29), near the wood of La Serre, while in the form of a wolf, he had attacked and slain with his teeth and claws a little girl of ten or twelve years, drawn her into a thicket and gnawed the flesh from her arms and legs.

On the fourteenth day after All Saints (November 14), also in the form of a wolf, he had seized a little boy, strangled him, and partially eaten him.

Asked how he could have strangled the child if he were in wolf's form at the time, he was at first vague in his replies, but finally recollected that his hands had not been changed, so he still had the use of his fingers.

On the Friday before St. Bartholomew's Day he had seized a boy of twelve or thirteen near the village of Perrouze and killed him, but was prevented from eating him by the approach of some peasants. These men were found and corroborated the prisoner's statement.

Although the little girl whose rescue was the cause of his arrest declared the prisoner had been in human form when he attacked her, Gilles Garnier stoutly maintained he had been in wolf's shape at the time. And to prove his power to change into a wolf at will, he suddenly sank to his all-fours on the court room floor, began capering about in grotesque imitation of a wolf, and emitted a series of howls, yelps and growls which perfectly simulated those of a ferocious beast of prey.

The court deliberated over his case, decided he had imitated wolf calls only to terrify his victims, but had never actually assumed wolf's form, and consequently voted him guilty of simple murder, unaccompanied by sorcery. As a murderer, he was punishable only by the civil authorities.

Sentence followed hard upon the verdict. On the tenth day following his arrest, Gilles Garnier, the self-confessed werewolf of St. Bonnot was dragged by ropes attached to his ankles over a rough road for a distance of nearly a mile, bound to a stake and burned to death.

NOTE: *The reader must be aware that Gilles Garnier was the victim of that form of insanity known as zoomania, where the patient believes himself an animal. Zoomania, or that branch of it known as loupomania, where the lunatic imagines himself a wolf, is, fortunately, relatively uncommon today, yet frequent enough to be recognized by medico-legal authorities. If it be remembered that Gilles Garnier was obviously a man of feeble intellect, and that all France, indeed all Europe of that day reeked with terror tales concerning the* LOUP-GAROU, *which tales Garnier had heard (and implicitly be-*

lieved) since earliest infancy, it can readily be seen how, when his poor wits finally broke down, he came to imagine himself a werewolf.

The fact that he was lucid enough on every subject save this one delusion, stamps his ailment as paranoia, or monomania, one of the commonest forms of insanity among the young and middle aged. The man must have been quite powerless to restrain himself when seized with one of his attacks, and, in any modern court, he would have been committed to an institution without even being brought to trial.

It does not appear that he ate the flesh of his victims because of hunger. On the contrary, this shocking act must be regarded purely as a symptom of his derangement. When under the spell of his disease the lunatic frequently resorts to the most unlikely diet. The author was once present at an autopsy performed on a paranoiac's body when no less than half a dozen ten-penny nails were extracted from the unfortunate man's stomach, several of them almost entirely eroded by the natural hydrochloric acid of that organ.

—SEABURY QUINN.

Imprisonment of Baron De Geramb

THE family of Geramb is of French origin, and has long been established at Vienna, where its different members have distinguished themselves in the various employments given them by their sovereign, who had always estimated their worth as it deserved.

One of them, who was chamberlain to Francis II was entrusted by the emperor with a diplomatic mission of a secret nature, and went by his orders to Hamburgh. It was at that period when Bonaparte was at war with Austria. Scarcely had Monsieur de Geramb arrived at the inn, where he purposed staying for some time, than he found himself surrounded by the satellites of Napoleon, who had arrived the evening before, and who, disguised as servants, had announced him under another name, saying that he was only going to change his carriage, as he was to go on in the one they had brought. He was therefore, soon after his arrival, seized on, and carried off with all his papers, without being able to speak to anyone, or make himself known. He was transported to the Chateau de Vincennes, thrown into a dungeon, where he could only see the light of day through a hole made in the roof, and through which he received a scanty portion of food. From that time he had little doubt but that he was shortly destined to become a victim to the atrocious policy of a man into whose power he had fallen in a manner so contrary to the laws of nations. He, therefore, set about preparing himself for instant death. In the meantime his imprisonment was prolonged from day to day, from week to week, and from year to year, without any questions being asked him; without his seeing the face of any human being, except that of the gaoler, who, every twenty-four hours, let down a basket from the height of fifteen feet, and which contained his scanty meal; who inquired of him every fortnight, if he wanted anything, and never replied to any question he asked him.

At length, after several years passed away in this frightful solitude, he was much surprised, in the month of April, 1814, to hear several doors opening in the caverns, and even that of his own dungeon. He had no doubt but what the hour of his punishment was arrived, and he was so resigned to his long-expected fate, that he scarce felt any emotion. In the meantime, the gaoler, presenting himself before him only said, with a harsh voice, "Come out Sir." However he might feel himself prepared to meet his fate with submission, he thought he ought not to show too much haste in hurrying on the fatal moment; and he remained quiet, waiting to see how he should be disposed of, while he employed himself in prayer and meditation. Half an hour after the gaoler appeared again, found him on his knees, and cried out, "Well, are you coming out? Everybody has gone out." Baron de Geramb, not rightly comprehending these words, and becoming more and more astonished, rose up, followed the man, who walked before him with a lamp in his hand, and ascended with difficulty a long flight of stairs. He, at length, arrived in a court, where he saw a number of persons, whose squalid figures and meagre countenances, nevertheless, evinced some great and joyful surprise. They were, like himself, prisoners just relieved from their fetters; and who, by their cries of "Long live the king," felicitated each other, as they mutually embraced, and hailed the return of Louis le Desire. Among these groups was a venerable bishop, who, extending his hands over one and the other, alternately bestowed on them his blessing and his pious exhortations. The baron threw himself on the bosom of the prelate, and with his eyes suffused in tears, he said to him, "Ah! Sir, this moment, so sweet to my companions, how cruel is it to me! At an immense distance from my native country, unknown to any one at Paris, having but very slight means of subsistence, I expect death will soon terminate my sorrows; I have no other wish than to make confession of my faults to a minister of our holy religion, and receive that absolution which I hope to see ratified in heaven, as my penitence is sincere; the liberty that is now granted me is a more cruel gift than that death to which I fancied myself destined." "My dear son," said the bishop, pressing the baron to his bosom, and leading him out of the castle, "never despair of the goodness of Providence; he never forsakes those who put their trust in him. If heaven has been pleased to try you thus, it perhaps may recompense your patience and sufferings even in this life; I dare hope, after the religious sentiments you have just manifested, that you are destined to be one of the chief supports of our church." As they uttered these last words, they had arrived at the outward gate of the castle, and were interrupted by the clamor of the drum and trumpets. Baron de Geramb turned about, and that moment perceived his brother, who was a Major-General in the Austrian service, and was then at the head of a corps of Cuirassiers belonging to the emperor. The two brothers rushed to each other's arms, and suffered a most affecting scene to the surrounding spectators, as well as the venerable prelate, who seemed to have seen the goodness of the Almighty rewarding the piety of Monsieur de Geramb; which determined him, from that moment, to renounce the vanities of this world, and to enter a monastery of the most rigid order of discipline and austerity.

What Was It, This Fearsome Visitor of the Night That So Terribly Shook the Nerves of Two Strong Men?

Just Bones

By SAMUEL STEWART MIMS

I HAVE lived beyond my three-score years and ten. If seventy years is the maximum age allotted to man, then the Timekeeper has allowed thirteen more to slip by without ringing the bell. Why? I do not know.

Age is the old man's armor. Because of his age he is pardoned for thinking that the best men and women lived fifty years ago when he was in his prime.

After these admissions, if it occurs to you that I am overstating the strength of body and other qualifications of my friend Chad Wells and myself, kindly remember that I sit in retrospection, day after day, rehearsing in my mind, over and over, the episode that was enacted fifty years ago.

It is past my understanding that I did not become insane, as did Chad Wells. Perhaps I was as strong physically as Chad was back in those days, but I never even claimed or pretended, although I was mannish and somewhat given to self-exultation at that age, to be as fearless as he was. Many times have I heard old Wilbur Brownley say of him, "That fool ain't skeered of man, beast or devil," and I always thought the strong assertion well justified.

Strange things happen in this world. Forty-two years ago Chad Wells died,

hopelessly insane, in the Pineville Asylum. He had been an inmate for seven years and five months, when death kindly ended his miserable life. Yes, strange things happen in this world. Here I am eighty-three years old, yet I was no stronger physically, and not as fearless, as was Chad when "That Thing" began coming into our tent at night.

I can now see the twisted legs and the drawn feet of "That Thing." It was something that dragged itself along on its rump, pulling and clawing with crab-like claws and toes. Its hind feet were used in scratching its nose and were used that night in an attempt to hide its face from us, or to shield it from the light of the candle that Chad held in his trembling hands.

Well do I know that I shall be criticised for calling it "That Thing," but as I am the only living human (unless "That Thing" be a human) who knows what caused Chad Wells to become insane, and since I am writing of this episode that has never been told heretofore, I must put it down straight. Although my own mind becomes confused and I often realize that I am thinking of "That Thing" as if it were a man, there are other times when I can think of it only as a demon from hell.

I know, as did old man Wilbur Brownley, that Chad Wells was not scared of man, beast or devil, but Chad was scared of "That Thing," and he was so uncontrollably frightened that greenish-white froth exuded from the corners of his mouth and trickled upon his chin and seemed to cling there as foam collects against a snag in a swollen stream, all of which I could see as he held the lighted candle just above his head, peering at the crouching, cringing form of "That Thing."

LIKE most old men, I am getting ahead of my story. There are many persons younger than I am who will remember when the Louisiana, Texas & Gulf Railroad was built through south Louisiana to the Gulf of Mexico. They also remember a great many of the weird tales that have been told about Jean Lafitte and his crew of pirates that made boat transportation along the Gulf coast very hazardous for many years. They recall the stories about the treasures that were buried in the cypress brakes of south Louisiana by the adventurous Frenchmen, and how that pirate, although cruel, always brought the bodies of the poor victims of his pillaging crew to the shore and buried them, Jean Lafitte, himself, conducting some kind of burial rite at the time of interment.

Fifty years ago that country was replete with stories of romance and adventure.

Attention is called to these facts in order to admit to you that Chad and I were continually hearing these fantastic stories, and that our minds were receptive and impressionable while we were in that section of the state surveying out the right of way for the Louisiana, Texas & Gulf Railroad. And the first night "That Thing" came into our tent I almost reached the conclusion that I had seen my first ghost, but two nights later I knew without doubt that it was not a ghost.

I take it that the strongest believer in the mysterious and the occult will admit that ghosts and spirits do not scratch, claw, bite, or strike with a club; nor have I ever heard anyone claim that ghosts would curse and swear in two different languages when physical pain was inflicted upon them. "That Thing" cursed Chad and me that night in language, both English and French, that I dare not set down, even in my personal and private memoirs. Such vile epithets as I had never heard before, nor have I heard since, came shrieking from the sputtering lips of "That Thing" as he or it sprang into the air clawing and scratching and biting and striking. It fought more like some wild bird such as I have never seen, but how I imagine one would fight if defending its life. I have since seen cocks fight and they reminded me of the way "That Thing" fought. However, there was something these fowls could not get into their melees that "That Thing" was past master at, such as striking and clawing with all of its four feet while in mid-air, and actually biting at one and the same time. Then it would drop to the ground upon its rump, bouncing therefrom into the air where something mysterious seemed to suspend it, thwarting the law of gravity.

It seems impossible for me to write out this episode coherently and with continuity, but I am determined that the nephews and nieces of Chad Wells shall know what killed him, or at least what drove him insane. If this document is to be found among my papers after I am dead and gone, I sincerely hope it will be published, for many there are who will be glad to know that Chad Wells was not guilty of any mental or physical abuse that destroyed his mind. However, I do believe that Chad could have, by force of will, driven the horrors of those nights out of his mind. I did, which no doubt accounts for my living beyond my three score years and ten. Never have I mentioned those three nights of "That Thing" to a living soul, nor have I ever before penned one line about anything pertaining to those experiences that redirected my course in life, for no man can be the same normal, nonchalant, devil-may-care person after encountering some death-dealing, soul-torturing creature of the devil.

Poor old Truebuck! He was my deer hound. When I awoke that first night and heard him whining and howling, I instantly knew that something was wrong. Although Truebuck was a deer hound, he was also a good watch-dog. He was my friend and protector. I got up to go to him because I thought he was suffering, but when I got out of my bunk something right close to me began to chatter and sputter. I sat down upon my bunk because I was not familiar with such sounds, and was playing for time in order to clear my brain from the dulness of sleep. "That Thing" became more tranquil when I sat down, but it continued to make a noise like the rasping sound made by a frightened bat, at the same time crunching its teeth together as a sleeping child does when bad dreams are making it restless.

I could hear Chad's deep rhythmical breathing and I knew that he was sleeping soundly, therefore, to disturb him would be inconsiderate when I knew full well he was fatigued from many miles of walking. Therefore I sat quietly for perhaps ten minutes. Then "That Thing" began to move about in the tent.

Chad's old-time knapsack was hanging on a nail that he had driven into one of the tent stays. In this knapsack were some portions of venison, some corn hoe-cakes, and two or more baked sweet potatoes, this food being Chad's lunch for the following day. It was our custom before retiring at night to prepare our lunch for the next day and to place it in our knapsacks in readiness for an early start the next morning.

AS I SAT there on the side of my bunk contemplating the proper and brave thing to do, for I must now admit that I was somewhat frightened, "That Thing" moved over to the tent stay, took Chad's knapsack off the nail and began eating that lunch. As I write down these notes my ear drums seem to quiver at the sound of "That Thing" munching and crunching upon Chad's lunch. If the memory of those sounds still affects my ear drums after the lapse of fifty years, think, will you, what the effect must have been there in the darkness of that tent fifty years ago.

SEVERAL weeks have passed since I wrote the foregoing. The last paragraph was written late at night. It must have been the sudden coming of a norther, the moaning of the wind, and the howling of a dog that affected me. I lay in my bed positively ashamed of my cowardice. My nerves were in a frenzy. I prayed for sleep, but none came. I could hear nothing but "That Thing" munching and crunching upon those bones that it had taken out of Chad's knapsack. Then I happened to think in mockery of how foolish it was for me to be affected by something that happened fifty years ago. I began to cheer myself with the fact that I had warded off this thing for fifty years by sheer power of will and that it was absurd for me to lose my nerve when, perhaps, that creature of the devil was long since dead, and its spirit! God! Its spirit! Where was the spirit of "That Thing" if it were dead? Then I remembered that I did not believe in ghosts, and so remembering I decided to laugh out loud and strong in order to reassure myself. But when I laughed it was not my laugh—it was the chattering sputter and the rasping squeak of "That Thing"!

I have not thought of this story that I am writing for several weeks, because I abandoned all thought of "That Thing" until I could get my nerves out of the "kinks." Although I let a moaning wind and a howling dog and too much concentration on this episode of fifty years ago get me down, I am determined to continue. I shall write out this episode to its finish. I am quite sure my strong determination will keep me from losing my mental equilibrium again, and I apologize for the break in my story, brought about by my sudden weakness. Especially is this annoying to me when in the beginning I asked pardon for any probable egotism that might flare up in the telling of this episode.

I SAT there on the side of my bunk contemplating the propriety of shooting this intruder. Had I been in the tent alone I know that I would have shot "That Thing," or at least I would have tried, because at the time nothing had caused me to believe it to be anything but some strange, wild animal of the swamp country.

Would it not be the act of a coward to shoot a living creature while not knowing what it was? Would Chad do such a thing? No, positively I knew that he would not, nor would he have me do such a thing. Should I call Chad and let him find me trembling with fear, let him discover that the cause of my agitation was over-wrought imagination struggling to make something uncanny out of a predatory animal? The proper thing for me to do—the thing that Chad would do under similar circumstances—was to catch this nocturnal visitor and hold it until a candle or a pine torch could be lighted.

Before giving my mind time to change the course of my determined action, I quickly arose from my bunk and quietly walked over to where "That Thing" was munching away on Chad's lunch. I could have touched it. I could have grabbed it. But when I got within reach of "That Thing" my courage melted away and I stood weak and quivering. "That Thing" was ravenously hungry, for it had not heard my approaching footsteps. However, it must have suddenly heard my pounding heart, for in the twinkling of an eye it darted under the tent, at the same time grabbing me about the ankles and jerking my feet from under me. I must have hit the hard-pressed ground under the edge of the tent with tremendous force, for I was knocked unconscious.

Minutes or hours later, I do not know which, I began to hear faintly the sound of an ax. Gradually familiar noises began clearing my brain and I could hear the sturdy blows of Chad's ax, chopping upon the hard, dry oak limbs that we had accumulated for cooking fuel. I sat up and tried to look about me, but my eyeballs turned in their sockets and my head whirled in a dizzy haze. I stretched out on the ground again and then opened my eyes to learn that day was breaking. Old Truebuck arose, stretched himself and yawned, then walked over to me and licked my face. This act of kindness helped my mind to adjust itself to my surroundings.

While sitting there on the ground about fifty feet away from the tent I attempted to recall the happenings of the hideous night that had just passed. Fragments of incoherent fact were gathered together and pondered over until my memory became clear up to the time "That Thing" grabbed my ankles and jerked my feet from under me. As I was thus engrossed in meditation. Chad called me to get ready for breakfast.

Evidently he had not discovered that I was absent from my bunk when he got up and left the tent to cook breakfast. Our established rule was to alternate by weeks in our cooking duties, that is to say, Chad would cook all meals one week and I would take over the culinary duties the following week.

This was Chad's week to cook.

FOR some reason I was glad that Chad had not noticed my empty bunk before he left the tent, and that he had evidently not seen me lying upon the ground. Of course, it had been dark when he slipped into his trousers and boots. The trite expression that "it is always darkest just before the dawn" no doubt originated with some old time camper, and it was at this time that one of us crawled out each morning to boil the coffee, heat the fresh meat, and cook corn bread in an open skillet. I was also glad that the tent was between the spot where I was sitting and the place where Chad had a hot fire around the cooking stones upon which rested the crude cooking utensils.

These situations enabled me to slip into the tent for my trousers and boots. Of course, it is unnecessary for me to explain that men in those days who lived entirely out of doors removed but few of their clothes when retiring to their bunks at night. Therefore, it was necessary for me to put on only my trousers and boots and I was dressed for the day.

When I went to wash my face and hands in the little brook that supplied our camp with sufficient water, I found a bruise upon my left cheek and a worse one on my head. The one on my head was entirely hidden by my long, unkempt hair, but the one on my cheek must have been quite noticeable. I did not seem to know then, nor can I explain now, why I wanted to hide from Chad all the happenings of the night before, but I remember distinctly that I hoped Chad would not pay enough attention to the bruise on my face to ask any questions about it. Bruises and scratches and cuts were scarcely noticed by men who lived in the woods in those days, and it was quite satisfying to me when Chad failed to mention the blue spot that decorated the left side of my face. Although Chad was not much of a talker, I was convinced before the day ended that he knew nothing of the visit of "That Thing" the night before. I artfully suggested subjects calculated to cause him to mention anything unusual that he might have heard had he been disturbed by the antics and the strange noises of "That Thing."

What I must now admit stings me keenly. When the sun began to drop behind the dense cane-brakes and cast dark shadows beyond the tall cypress trees, I began to dread the oncoming night. When the evening breeze from the Gulf of Mexico began blowing through the long streamers of gray Spanish moss to tangle and weave them about the small twigs to which they clung, and the somber silhouettes from

these moving tresses began stealthily stealing about in front of me and over me. . . . Oh! I admit it! I was a coward. I dared not return to that tent. Instead, I dwelt upon the importance of a letter that I must post, even though it necessitated my walking nine miles to the nearest postoffice and back the next morning in time for work.

THE following morning when I returned to camp Chad was drinking coffee and eating cold corn bread. He scarcely greeted me when I said "Good morning, Chad" and sat down upon a block of wood that I used at meal time for a chair. His right eye was bloodshot and I noticed that the muscles in that side of his face twitched at irregular intervals. The veins across his temples bulged out bold and prominent, the blue of them exaggerating their size. He held his coffee cup clasped between both hands—I wondered why. He replaced the cup upon the crude table with both hands. He bit hungrily at the pone of corn bread that he picked up immediately after releasing the cup.

I needed nothing more to tell me that Chad Wells had experienced a bad night, and that he was in worse condition than I was after walking eighteen miles to and from the postoffice, following a night of torment with "That Thing."

"Chad," I said, trying to break a silence that was becoming uncomfortable, "the Atchafalaya is rising several inches a day and has been for the past week; back water up the Red is pushing into her, with all the tributaries of both rivers pouring Arkansas rains into her. Wouldn't be surprised if we aren't run out o' here."

Chad attempted to answer me as he reached for his coffee cup with one hand. That hand trembled like one with palsy. Then I knew why Chad was handling his cup with both hands. His voice was high-pitched and unnatural.

First it embarrassed him for me to ask questions, then I could see that it angered him, and having consideration for my good friend and compassion upon him while in this condition, I desisted from any attempt at conversation during the entire day. He made no attempt to talk to me, nor did he utter a word until we had returned to the tent late that evening, when he suddenly surprised me by saying, as much to the trees as to me: "This is going to be a hell of a night."

I had been so absorbed in the poor condition of Chad during the day that I had quite thrown off the tormenting fear that gnawed into me all the day before. But that cold declaration of Chad's chilled me to the bone: "This is going to be a hell of a night." It brought me back to "That Thing." It seemed to deliver me into the clutches of that hideous, uncanny, devilish creature, munching and crunching upon the bones from Chad's lunch, making a noise like the rasping sound made by a frightened bat, chattering and sputtering. I could see it, yet I had never seen it. But there it was, with its twisted legs and drawn feet, dragging itself along on its rump, pulling and clawing with crab-like claws and toes. It had been too dark in the tent the night before for me to see it, but there it was. There it was, dragging itself! It had a head like that of a man, formed like that of a man, but there seemed to be no skin covering its face—just raw flesh, dry but bloody looking. There it was creeping and dragging along, with eyes glittering out of the shadows like chiseled rubies. I shrieked a sort of command for it to stop. "That Thing" grinned, then raked its long finger-nails across its protruding teeth, making a rasping noise like that of a frightened bat.

I SEE "That Thing" now. It is here. It is there. It is everywhere. Chad! Come back, Chad! Come to your old comrade, boy, and help me fight. I helped you, Chad, that night when we were young. Come, Chad! Come! Come!

Too late, it has me by the ankles now, dragging me and munching and crunching upon my bones.

I AM now where Chad Wells died. I am in the Pineville Asylum. I became insane as did Chad Wells, but there are times when I can understand everything. I hear the doctors discussing me and they say I have semi-lucid periods. I hear some of the nurses say, "I am afraid of that wild nut." Just a little while ago, it must have been this morning, or maybe yesterday, one of them said, "Doctor, don't make me go in there; I'm afraid of 'That Thing'."

Yes, "That Thing" put me here, just as it did Chad Wells, but by all the demons of hell I'll finish this story! I know where I left off. I was telling about "That Thing" coming to our tent on the third night just before dark, and I could see it plainly for the few minutes preceding the blackness of night. I was seeing it when my nerves got into the kinks again, but I'm all right now.

"THAT Thing" came dragging along. I have told you how it did and how it looked. Chad trembled for a spell, a minute maybe, then he started toward "That Thing." It spread out flat upon the ground with its little raw-flesh head turned upward. When Chad got within a step of "That Thing" the little raw-flesh head stretched way out like that of an angry goose and hissed through its protruding teeth. Chad quickly kicked at the ugly head, but before he could get his foot back to the ground, "That Thing" was in mid-air, scratching, clawing and biting. Before Chad could strike, the hellish thing was back on its rump, ready for another spring. Chad again kicked viciously at the raw-flesh head, but it shot sideways and upward, with those fiendish claws twisting and writhing and squirming for an opening at the man's throat. While off the ground the protruding teeth of "That Thing" extended far beyond its hair-covered lips, exaggerating, if such a thing were possible, the murderous appearance of this soul destroying archangel of the devil.

As much as I loved Chad, I could not force myself to go to his aid. I prayed aloud for mental and physical strength to rescue my friend and comrade from the clutches of "That Thing," for now the twisted legs and drawn feet and its crab-like claws were about Chad's neck and head. The protruding teeth were glistening from against the background of the raw-flesh head and the hair-covered lips; they were darting forward and backward as if sparring for an opening at Chad's throat.

I tried to close my mind—make it a blank. I rushed into the fray and grabbed. God! I can feel that slimy, jelly-like substance now as it sloughed off "That Thing" and quivered in my hands. I then opened my mind (I hope you get my meaning) which told me that the body and form of that hellish demon was by no means demolished or impaired by losing the quantity of slushy slime that quivered in my hands. However, I must have torn "That Thing" from the neck and head of Chad, for it was now about to attack my friend with a heavy limb that it had grasped within its claws.

Now for the first time Chad lost his nerve. I do not think it was because of "That Thing" seizing the heavy limb and raising it to strike Chad, but because this monster suddenly began to curse us with language too vile to write down. "That Thing" cursed in French and cursed in English. It was enraged. The more it cursed us, the more furious it got.

When I saw Chad running I followed him with all my might. We were only about fifty yards from our tent. I could

feel "That Thing" clawing at my back; I could hear the rasping, twanging noise of its claws being drawn across those protruding teeth. I prayed then and I thank God now for strength to run. Although my legs seemed paralyzed and my joints seemed to be sore and stiff, I knew that I was gaining on Chad.

But Chad disappeared. One moment he was just a few steps ahead of me. Now, he was gone—like that. I saw him. I never took my eyes off him until he disappeared.

Then something went wrong with me. I was sinking. The earth was sinking beneath me. I could feel something crawling and squirming under me. Was it "That Thing"? No, I felt the boot legs and knew it was Chad. Then I felt bones, the frame of a man's chest. Then I knew we had fallen into an open grave. We had seen many times a slightly sunken place in the ground not far from the tent and I had meant to examine it, but now I knew what it was. It was an old grave. No doubt it had once held the body of one of Jean Lafitte's victims, but now the flesh had returned to dust, the crude coffin had amalgamated with the soil, and the worms of the earth had devoured the hair, and there was nothing left but bones, just bones, lifeless bones.

I reached for Chad's boot-legs. I wanted to feel them again; I wanted to feel something that was warm with life, not cold and feelingless like bones, dead bones. Instead I felt . . . instead of feeling Chad's legs . . . instead of feeling something warm with life, I felt, I felt something crawling and crinkling and squirming. I felt jelly, slushy slime that quivered in my fingers, and I felt claws at my throat. Then "That Thing" began laughing and chattering. It was triumphant laughter and defiant chatter. Then it stopped and hissed. Oh! Savior of Souls, those teeth, and that rasping, twanging noise of claws being drawn across protruding teeth!

I SEE "That Thing" now. It is here. It is there. It is everywhere. Chad! Come back, Chad! Come to your old comrade, boy, and help me fight. I helped you, Chad, that night when we were young. Come, Chad! Come! Come!

Too late! It has me by the throat now, dragging me and munching and crunching upon my bones. Maybe it's the bones of the man in whose grave I am lying with "That Thing." My bones and his. But everything is just bones.

Anecdote Concerning the Execution of King Charles the First

RICHARD BRANDON, common executioner or hangman, at that time, died upon Wednesday, June 20, 1649, within five months after the king's martyrdom. The Sunday before Brandon died, a young man of his acquaintance, going to visit him, asked him how he did, and whether he was not troubled in conscience for cutting off the king's head? Brandon replied, "Yes, because he was at the king's trial, and heard the sentence denounced against him, which caused the said Brandon to make this solemn vow or protestation, viz: 'Wishing God to perish his body and soul, if ever he appeared on the scaffold to do the act, or lift up his hand against him'." And he further declared, that he was no sooner entered upon the scaffold, (to do the wicked act) but he immediately fell a trembling, and hath (ever since) to his death continued in the same agony. He likewise confessed that he had 30 pounds for his pains, all paid him in half crowns within half an hour after the stroke was struck; and that he had an orange stuck full of cloves, and an handkerchief out of the king's pocket. As soon as he was carried off from the scaffold, he was offered 20s for that orange by a gentleman in Whitehall, but refused the same, but afterwards sold it for 10s in Rosemary-lane. About six o'clock that night he returned home to his wife, living in Rosemary-lane, and gave her money, saying it was the dearest money he ever earned in his life; which prophetical words were soon made manifest. About three days before he died, (as above mentioned) he lay speechless, uttering many a sigh and heavy groan, and in a most deplorable manner departed from his bed of sorrow. For his burial great store of wine was sent in by the city of London, and a great multitude of people stood waiting to see his corpse carried to the church-yard, some crying out, "Hang him, rogue, bury him in a dunghill," others pressing upon him, saying, they would quarter him for executing the king; insomuch, that the churchwardens and masters of the parish were fain to come for the suppressing of them, and with difficulty at last he was carried to Whitechapel church-yard, having a bunch of rosemary at each end of the coffin, and on top thereof, with a rope tied across from one end to the other.

The man that waited upon this executioner, when he gave the fatal blow was a rag man in Rosemary-lane.

Anne Boleyn

IN Housie's Memoirs, Vol. I., page 485, a little circumstance is recorded concerning the decapitation of the unfortunate Anne Boleyn which illustrates an observation of Hume. Our historian notices that her executioner was a Frenchman of Calais, who was supposed to be uncommonly skilful; it is probable that the following incident may have been proved by tradition in France, from the account of the executioner himself. Anne Boleyn being on the scaffold, would not consent to have her eyes covered with a bandage, saying that she had no fear of death. All that the minister, who assisted at her execution, could obtain from her, was that she would shut her eyes. But as she was opening them at every moment, the executioner was fearful of missing his aim, and was obliged to invent an expedient to behead the queen. He drew off his shoes, and approached her silently; while he was at her left hand, another person advanced at her right, who made a great noise in walking, so that this circumstance drew the attention of Anne; she turned her face from the executioner, who was enabled by this circumstance to strike the fatal blow without being disarmed by that spirit of affecting resignation which shone in the eye of the lovely but unfortunate victim.

A Story of Deep Oriental Love

FIRST DEGREE

By ROBERT COSMO HARDING

"GOLAMONG!" Thus Soo Bong extended matutinal greeting to Yuen Gow, his employer, as the latter entered his shop shortly after the hour of ten on a morning that was fogless, windless, warm and conducive to the development of love's young dream.

Yuen Gow returned the salutation curtly, indifferently. And thereafter did not heed the youth who went about his work so conscientiously, so willingly, so ardently. Yuen Gow's mood never harmonized with a day of Spring.

On his part Soo Bong was not in the least perturbed by his employer's manner. His was accustomed to it, expected it. Had it been different he would have been surprised and worried. Hai! What different attitude could he, a penniless hand-to-mouth toiler, expect from one of Grant Avenue's most prosperous merchants? The youth's wage was a mere pittance. Yet even so, in the way of youth, he was hopeful—extravagantly hopeful. The promises for the years to come were roseate.

A natural optimism to the young, no matter what the nationality. Hai! Eyeglasses were not the outcome of a day's experimentation. Knowledge was not garnered in reading but one page of Confucius. So philosophized Soo Bong. But more to the point there was Sin Ping, coveted prize, daughter of Yuen Gow, on the horizon!

In the eyes and mind of Soo Bong this daughter of his "bossee" was the exquisite quintessence of all girlhood. In her was embodied all his dream of idyllic happiness in the life to be lived. Not for one sad instant did he speculate upon the possibility that Sin Ping did not and never would love him. That thought had no part in his fantasy. His were daydreams never touched by realities.

Soo Bong knew that she liked him. Whenever she came into her father's shop she had the loveliest smile and the pleasantest word for him. It was these, in the first place, that had won his heart. What did it matter that he was the son of a lowly coolie! In China, yes, Sin Ping would have been unattainable. But here in America—

Affairs glided along peacefully enough until the advent of the Chinese New Year. This year the observance savored of Occidentalism. Every year the celebration was becoming less Oriental. Fewer firecrackers banged to scare away mythical devils. There was feasting—and, of course, the settlement of the year's accumulated debts. But nearly all the other rites, older than the white man's civilization, were forgotten.

This year Yuen Gow celebrated by inviting all of his friends and employees to a feast at his very pretentious bungalow just beyond the edge of St. Francis Wood. In this way he appealed to his gods for special favors for himself, his family and his revered ancestors.

Soo Bong, clad in his best native Chinese garments, entered the Yuen Gow bungalow and immediately Yuen Gow himself greeted him.

"Thrice welcome, Soo Bong! Make thyself comfortable and one of the merriest." The tone of his voice was the quintessence of hospitality. For, on the New Year caste is forgotten—no, not forgotten, but religiously ignored.

The youth fidgeted. Then answered properly: "I am honored to be here." He didn't feel elated. Nor much at ease. For, despite the gracious greeting, he couldn't forget that all callers that day were received with the same words.

Yuen Moy, the only son of the house, took Soo Bong in tow and piloted him to the music room where the younger set was gathered. Most of them wore American clothes. A piano-player rioted through the latest jazz, accompanied by many young Chinese voices singing in perfect English the inane words of the song. As Yuen Moy, with his newest guest, crossed the room the cacophony ceased. But almost immediately from a phonograph came the swift, intoxicating strains of a fox-trot. Couples moved, in close embrace, across the floor.

SOO BONG'S discomfiture increased tenfold. He didn't dance. He didn't sing American songs. But he didn't have much time to feel ill at ease, for Sin Ping, a lotus flower who spoke American slang, saw his embarrassment and cried: "Welcome to our city, Soo Bong!" Then, in the melodious Chinese tongue, she wished him a very happy New Year.

"Thank you," he replied, and returned the wish, his heart thumping with hope. "I am mortifyingly sorry. I do not know these new dances," he said. "I shall have to learn them, I perceive. Perhaps you can recommend me to a capable teacher who can direct my footsteps along the path of music."

"Just like that," Sin Ping promised, smiling captivatingly.

"And the intellectual one's name is—"

"Sin Ping—if you'll be so kind as to cut out the intellectual. Now, then, come on! Let's dance!" And immediately she placed her arm in position about his neck.

He drew back a little. But, glancing at the other couples and noting that all the girls had their arms in similar positions, he placed his own arm about her waist.

"Watch my feet. Do as I say and we'll get along famously," Sin Ping said. "Why, these dances are as easy to learn as it is for my father to make money! Now watch your step!"

The youth's feet, for the first five minutes or so, acted rather strangely. But after that, responding to the grace of his teacher, he caught the rhythm of the dance and was soon gracefully, if cautiously, executing its movements.

All too soon the dance ended, and Sin Ping slipped from his arms. But in a moment he was again on the floor with her. Hai! A new and exceedingly pleasant sensation. Thrilling! Now that the young ones had started there was no stopping them. A third record, livelier and madder than the others, was selected. Soo Bong was just on the verge of again taking his host's daughter in his arms when another youth stepped up to claim her.

"How about this one with me, Sin Ping?" he asked, ignoring the other.

The girl shook her head negatively. "Sorry, Bunny, but Soo Bong has engaged me as his teacher—for three more dances, at least: I'll tell you what, though—I'll give you the fourth."

Bun Kai, Bunny to his friends, raised

his narrow eyebrows above slits of eyes and frowned at Soo Bong, as if he were now aware of him for the first time. Bunny was not accustomed to taking a back seat; not he, son of Bun Poy, who was the richest restaurateur in Chinatown and half-owner in Grant Avenue's largest curio shop. Also, Bun Kai was very fond of the girl and considered himself a suitor for her hand. Hai! And why not? Her father looked upon him with much favor and Sin Ping treated him with far more consideration than any of the other of her eligible suitors who ever hovered so attentively about her. Bun Kai would have asked Sin Ping to become his bride long ere this day had he not been anxiously and impatiently awaiting his twenty-third birthday, at which time he would come into sole possession of a snug inheritance from his deceased mother.

Sin Ping stood smiling at Bunny bewitchingly, reading his thoughts. Then with a laugh, she took her position at Soo Bong's side. But Bunny wasn't so gracious, however. With a sneer on his lips, and an unmistakable emphasis upon his words, he said:

"That's the proper spirit, of course. New Year's makes all equal and—"

"Oh, that's not the reason at all, Bunny, old top," she called back to him over her shoulder as she and Soo Bong stepped away. "You flatter yourself too much."

Bunny watched the couple with a deepening scowl. Turning to a girl who stood near he said something which caused them to laugh rather contemptuously while their eyes never ceased to follow Sin Ping and Soo Bong. The latter flushed vividly under his yellow.

"Don't you mind," Sin Ping murmured. "It's one thing to be born with a gold spoon and another and greater achievement to acquire wealth by your own efforts. Remember, always, Soo Bong, that the purchasing power is in the actual gold—and that no amount of money can buy perpetual happiness." And in these words and in her own way, unconsciously, she had translated Confucius.

He pondered over this, and was more than pleased to be able to decipher the meaning between the lines. It revealed to him the breath-taking intelligence that he had as much chance to win this bewitching maiden as Bun Kai—that is, if he were not too long a time in acquiring his chest of treasures.

There was no fourth dance; just at the end of the third the announcement was made that the feast was served. Soo Bong, searching for his name written in Chinese characters, was at the far, lower end of the table when he heard a feminine voice call:

"You won't find it there, Soo Bong—it's right here, beside me. Aren't you glad?"

Without looking up the youth knew that the words were Sin Ping's. And when he did look, his heart leaping, he saw that Bunny was seated on the other side of her. Sin Ping was delightfully impartial; for once Bunny and Soo Bong were equal.

AFTERWARD, the men, Bunny included, sought the smoking den for the purpose of gambling. The game most popular was the ancient favorite, mah jongg. Soo Bong, not having any money for the purpose of wooing the goddess of luck, was compelled to remain away from the tables. Yet presently Sin Ping was again beside him.

"All the others have found something to do but us," she said. "I'd enjoy going to the movies or out to the beach with you this afternoon. What do you say?"

"Whichever you prefer will be my highest pleasure," he replied.

"Then it's settled—it's such a fine day I think I'll decide in favor of the beach. We'll walk to Beach Terraces, then follow the car tracks past Land's End to Sutro Heights, and then down on to the sand. You wait here and I'll be ready in a jiffy."

Soo Bong looked at his clothes with ill-concealed embarrassment; then at the girl's dress with admiration. She was dressed in the latest American mode; his clothes were the usual garments of an humble Oriental.

"Don't let that bother you any," she told him, divining his thoughts. "If I don't mind why should you?" And with these words she vanished, only to reappear in five minutes. Hai! Transformation! She was now clad in the flowered silk of rich Chinese maidens.

His eyes formed a query.

"Oh, yes," she laughed, "I love to dress this way—sometimes. Why, there's no better fun than walking down Market Street in these. We girls do it at least once a week. Gee, it's as much kick as a movie thriller or watching fire engines responding to an alarm! The way the tourists stare!"

Parked at the curb as they left the bungalow were several expensive automobiles. One Soo Bong recognized as the property of Yuen Gow. Another was Bunny's.

"I'd much rather walk than be stuffed like a mummy in a limousine. And especially on such a fine day. Isn't it glorious?" she said.

"The happiest I've ever had in my life," he agreed with a warm ring in his voice. And in his eyes there was the light of unquenchable love.

At the beach they found a secluded nook, sheltered from the wind.

Digging with her hand in the sand, and looking far out to sea, she asked in a dreamy voice: "Do you ever vision being rich?"

"It is so. Yet not so much for the wealth itself as for the happiness it can bring me. In reality, my dreams are the best part of me, the only part that seems to count."

"And what is that best part?" she queried, permitting her hand to stray very close to his.

Soberly he answered: "I cannot tell you—yet. But some day—"

"And why not now? Am I not worthy of your confidence?"

"Oh, indeed you are—and it is partly for that reason that I cannot now enlighten you."

Her hand almost touched his as she asked: "Has any girl anything to do with it?"

"That's the answer. She has. But in this land of freedom real happiness is only for him who is blessed with riches."

"You'll tell me who she is, won't you? Because, if you do, perhaps I can help you." And, it seemed unconsciously, her hand hit his. Nor was it withdrawn when his fingers closed over it.

"Why ask when you already know?" he whispered, allowing the pressure of his fingers to become a caress.

"You mean that I am the girl?" she breathed.

He nodded. And the next moment, without thinking of the consequences, forgetting his penury, he had taken her in his arms and kissed her. And as she did not struggle, but remained nestling there contentedly, he put all his pent-up dreams of love in the ardent kisses that followed.

Dusk was descending when they reached Yuen Gow's. Soo Bong left her at the gateway. In the hallway her brother, Yuen Moy, was waiting.

"Where have you been, little sister? The guests have departed without your good wishes. A breach of etiquette."

"Oh, I was out to the beach. Talk about a fine day and I'll say this New Year's was the greatest ever."

"You were with Soo Bong?" It was more statement than que

"Why ask when you know?" she countered independently.

Yuen Moy's expression was not pleasant to behold. His tone became domineering as he questioned further: "And perhaps you'll answer why you preferred dancing with Soo Bong to Bunny. You'd your choice of the prince and the pauper—and you favored the pauper. Where are your senses?"

"Perhaps I won't answer. I do that which pleases me most."

Sternly the brother asserted: "Soo Bong is not a fit youth to be your associate. The word has reached our father's ears of the occurrence and he is very angry. Better let this be the last time."

Hotly she retorted: "He is as good as Bunny any time!"

"You know nothing about it when you say that. Within a moon Bunny will be three and twenty years of age and—"

"I don't care if he'll be three and forty. It's nothing in my young life."

"We'll see. But in the meantime you ignore Soo Bong—that is my advice—and good advice at that."

THE MONTH drew to a close. And with the day came the birthday of Bun Kai and he was a guest for dinner at the bungalow of Yuen Gow. Directly after the elaborate meal Yuen Gow and his wife retired, while Yuen Moy, by prearrangement, hied himself to town, thus leaving Bun Kai a clear field. Nor was he long in coming to the point.

"Sin Ping, I do not doubt but that for quite a while you've known that I love you," he began his plea. His manner was the personification of assurance.

"How should I have guessed when you didn't tell me?" smiled Sin Ping. "I have many boy friends and they all show the utmost respect and friendship—perhaps all love me."

"That may be—and probably is so—but I want you to become my wife." He stepped close to her and endeavored to take her in his arms.

Deftly she evaded him.

"Not so fast and strenuous, Bunny, dear," she admonished him. "Aren't you taking too much for granted?"

"But you do love me," he insisted, however, this time making no move toward her. His voice, though, still retained its tone of assurance.

She nodded: "Like I love all my other boy friends—no more, no less."

"But you must care for one more than for all the rest," he argued.

"Maybe so," she admitted.

"Then it's Soo Bong!" he accused, his voice rising in anger. "Hai! What chances has he to marry you and make you happy, a penniless coolie's son, penniless himself!"

"More than you'll ever have, Bunny, dear. Wealth is a great asset in wooing a girl, but love is a greater one."

Bun Kai was not one to be rejected easily.

"But your father and Yuen Moy will never permit such an alliance. And so, without their sanction, how are you going to live?"

"Bunny, if the situation weren't so serious you'd be funny. But you forget that this isn't China—and that both Soo Bong and I are still young and that there are many other places besides my father's where he can earn money."

Bun Kai laughed with scornful, unrestrained amusement.

"Yes, I have a picture of you living upon Soo Bong's wages. No hurry, though, for you to decide. I shall wait."

"Wait, if you like! But don't—"

"Oh, there's many a slip 'twixt cup and lip—and the cup may be at my lips before many more moons shine in the heavens," he said hopefully.

The next evening there was a conference between Yuen Gow and his son. With the result that Sin Ping received an ultimatum from her father never again to acknowledge acquaintanceship with Soo Bong.

And at the very moment that the girl heard her father, down in a certain inner room in Waverly Place, Chinatown, the youth marked for ostracism was himself making three Chinese lottery tickets, one five, one ten and one twelve, for a prize of fifteen hundred dollars and proportions. The hour was nine in the evening. The drawing was scheduled for ten. At ten-fifteen Soo Bong was the possessor of fifteen hundred dollars!

One thousand, five hundred dollars! Compared to Bun Kai's inheritance not cause for elation. But to Soo Bong more. What wouldn't it buy! American clothes. Emancipation from ridicule. And Sin Ping so much nearer. Hai! It was the first step toward the acquisition of his treasure chest.

It so happened that some errand took Sin Ping to her father's shop the next afternoon. Soo Bong chanced to be near the entrance. And, instead of waiting to be recognized, as had always been his custom, he stepped forward eagerly and a smile illuminated his clean, boyish features. He could scarcely wait to impart the glad tidings. But he hadn't advanced many paces toward her when he halted abruptly. All the animation left him and a swift transition saddened his heart. For, instead of welcoming eyes and a happy smile, he met a frown of no uncertain meaning. She barely nodded her head, then turned her back. But she did not move away, this giving him the chance to inquire under his breath.

"If you are sorry because of the beach I shall call upon the devil-gods to drive the memory from my mind. It can be made but of the fabric of unreality."

Without turning toward him she answered: "Silly. Of course I'm not sorry. But there's trouble in the air. Meet me tonight at seven o'clock, at the Haight Street entrance to the Park."

His heart sang again as he drifted away from her. She loved him. Hai! What more could mortal desire of life?

They walked through the Stanyan Avenue lanes of Golden Gate Park. Through the arch they went, hand in hand, over to the playgrounds where belated children were still romping. Here they stopped for a few moments, then continued on across the grass past the tennis courts until they came to the shadows of the museum. By this time twilight was giving way to night. They sat, hand in hand, upon a bench.

"My father has forbidden me to converse with you hereafter," Sin Ping said, her voice trembling.

"Perhaps until last night, for I was poor then," he said hopefully. "But do not grieve because that is all changed now. In the late lottery last night my prize was many yen—fifteen hundred dollars." His arms stole around her, and his lips sought and found hers.

"Have you told my father of your luck?"

"No. I intended to tell him today, but when you uttered that warning I thought I had better wait."

"You are wise, my lover. Always wait if in doubt. But now, because our love is so strong and true, you may speak to my father of it."

"And if he receives me with favor will you marry me—very soon?"

"Your wish will be mine," she confessed. "Soo Bong, to me you are the handsomest man in all the world—you are my ideal."

The next morning Soo Bong sought and gained audience with Yuen Gow.

Yuen Gow congratulated him upon his winnings. And then, on impulse, the old merchant informed the youth that shortly he intended to open a branch store in

Fresno and that if he desired to invest his winnings in the metropolis of the San Joaquin Valley he could be manager of the place.

Soo Bong overflowed with expressions of gratitude. Yet perhaps had this offer not taken him so completely off his feet and he had scrutinized the older man's face keenly he would have detected a gleam that would have lessened his enthusiasm.

"When am I to leave?" he asked.

"Next week. Be prepared to make the journey Monday."

"And about Sin Ping? We love each other devotedly. Therefore, if in a year—"

Again that strange gleam in Yuen Gow's eyes as he said: "When the year is ended we shall see."

THAT night Sin Ping was an unwilling eavesdropper to a conversation between her father and her brother. She didn't remember all she heard, but that which made a lasting impression were the words of her father:

"I promised him that in a year he could claim your sister."

And her brother's answer:

"That was a safe promise, knowing as only you and I do, that the chances of his return are scarcely worth considering."

Strangely enough, and for some reason or other, when she met Soo Bong clandestinely that evening, she failed to speak of her kins' talk. And it is not at all likely that it would have influenced him.

Monday of the following week Soo Bong and Yuen Moy started for Fresno by automobile. The next day Yuen Moy returned alone. He seemed unusually pale. Also, he betrayed symptoms of decided nervousness. Aimlessly he wandered about the streets and alleys of Chinatown, never seeming able to remain for long in one place. Toward dusk he went to the family home.

And it was just at this hour that down in America's raisin patch, an American rancher, while walking across a part of his acreage, found a revolver, glittering new, with three cylinders empty. He picked it up wonderingly, proceeded a few paces—and came upon the body of a dead Chinese youth. He hurried to his ranch bungalow, and got the sheriff on the telephone. An hour later both the sheriff and the coroner arrived upon the scene.

Addressing the coroner the sheriff consulted: "What is it, Doc—murder or suicide?"

"It's not suicide, Ed. The bullets couldn't have entered this part of the body had the Chink himself pulled the trigger. Looks like cold-blooded murder to me. How're the tongs hereabouts? Anything like fireworks among 'em?"

Ed, the sheriff, shook his head. "They're as quiet as the Bridal Veil over in the Yosemite in the dead o' winter. Last week all of 'em signed up another peace pact—a regular league o' nations now. And here I was aimin' to have a little rest and now it's up to me and the rest o' my outfit to get busy. Doc, why is a Chink murder as bad as a Chink puzzle? The answer is: Because you don't know where to begin and there's no end. Well, if you've got all the dope you want I'll be stepping on the gas and get the San Francisco 'boys' in this game."

Hours later one of the San Francisco "boys," formerly one of the Chinatown squad, Terry Morane in the directory, went down to view the features of the dead youth.

"Know him, Terry?" the sheriff inquired.

Morane scratched his head. "Maybe I do and maybe I don't. To you most Chinks look alike, but if you mix with 'em the way I do you get to tell the difference. This stiff looks familiar to me but I'll have to do a little scouting around before I can name him."

Next day, back in Chinatown, Morane wandered into the shop of Yuen Gow.

"Where's the young feller used to be here?" he asked the proprietor.

Almost indifferently the Chinaman asked: "Who you mean?"

"I don't sabe his name—never did. But where is he?"

Again came the query: "Who you mean?" But this time was added a name—Soo Bong.

"Well, where is he? How many times do I have to ask the same question?"

"Fresno—open branch store there," came the information desired.

Morane wired the Fresno sheriff: "Any new Chink store opened in your town lately?"

The answer read: "No."

Back to Yuen Gow's marched Morane. "You lied to me," he told the father of Sin Ping. "Why?"

"No sabe," was the masked answer.

The officer now perceived the futility of quizzing the old man. So he inquired: "You've got a son, Mo-ey, haven't you?"

For answer Yuen Gow called aloud: "Yuen Moy!" And added some Chinese words.

"What did you and Soo Bong quarrel about on the way to Fresno the other day? I know more about your movements than you think." Morane shot query and assertion at him in one breath.

Yuen Moy was not as clever as his father. Falteringly he said: "About a girl."

Morane did the logical thing. He took the young Chinese to the station and there lodged against him the charge: "Held for Fresno sheriff."

Naturally the evening papers carried the news. And Sin Ping read the article with a dull and aching heart. Tears streaming down her cheeks? Not yet. The shock was far too great. Her mind was far too stunned by poignant grief. All evening she remained in the seclusion of her room. She was like one in a trance. Then, suddenly, like a hideous ogre, there came to her the memory of her father's words to Yuen Moy anent Soo Bong. And her brother's assertion of exultant triumph.

She sat immobile for more than an hour. Yet her mind was alive and active, her thoughts bitter. The tears that would have relieved her grief would not flow. Such is the signal of deepest grief—dry eyes, apparent passivity. Her loss was irreparable—and had been caused by those who loved her and whom she had loved and trusted, by those to whom she had looked for happiness and protection.

AT last there arrived the demand for action. It completely overcame the lethargy that was her first reaction to great grief. She crossed slowly to a little writing desk that stood at a window overlooking the sea. Before this she sat down. Slowly she took up a pen; inked it; drew paper and envelope to her. Then, in English, she wrote a note to the Chief of Police, revealing therein the conversation she had overheard. Rereading what she had written she inserted the note in the envelope; addressed it; sealed and stamped it. Then she put on a light cape and carried the note to the corner mail box. Here she hesitated only a fraction of a second, then resolutely posted it.

She returned immediately to her room. No one else was in the bungalow. Carefully she dressed herself in her prettiest frock, and then went again to the writing desk. This time, instead of pen and ink, she used ink and brush with which to write her second note. And, with tears now streaming from her eyes, she wrote in Chinese:

"You and my brother have killed my

lover, Soo Bong. And as you slew him so you murdered the heart that was in me, the heart that can no longer function."

She put this upright against the ink bottle; quickly rose and went to the bathroom. When she returned to her room she held in her hand a small bottle upon which was the skull and crossbones indicating poison.

Sin Ping raised it to her lips, and was just about to take a draught when excited voices on the walk halted her.

She ran to the window, looked out—and saw Soo Bong being led toward the steps by Yuen Gow and Yuen Moy!

They were gesticulating rapidly. The poison fell from her hand. A sob, hysterical and joyous, choked her. She fairly flew to the door and flung it open just as they reached it.

"Soo Bong! Soo Bong!" she cried as she ran to his outstretched arms. "Soo Bong, my love! Oh, my dearest!"

Father and brother stood a little to one side, smiling approval upon the scene. Near-tragedy had changed their views—

And Terry Morane is still trying to establish the identity of the Chinese youth who was killed near Fresno.

The Heroes of Hindoostan

ON the banks of the Ganges, in the strictest bonds of amity, lived Akajah and Sammael descended from the blood royal, the pride of Hindoostan, and the terror of her enemies. Together they resided; together they roamed the forests, taming the ferocious tiger, and subjecting to their skill the furious lion; and together they fought the lawless bands that annually descended the mountains, to plunder the defenseless husbandman, and trembling shepherd; before them fled the marauders with terror. Inseparable and invincible, they feared no one; for no one they injured; they were respected by the virtuous, who regarded them as their protectors; they were hated by the vicious, for to them were they inexorable.

To destroy this connection, or sow dissension between them, had long been the aim of a neighboring Rajah, on whose territories they resided; but vain had hitherto been his endeavors. Chance at length seemed to favor him with one opportunity, which with the malignity of a demon, he eagerly embraced.

The annual purification of the Hindoos had commenced; the men had bathed in the sacred waters of the Ganges, received absolution, and retired, when the Tchoudar proclaimed, with a loud voice accompanied by the sonorous gong, that the female purification was about to commence, and commanded all the male sex to retire from the hallowed spot, under penalty of a cruel death. Three times was the proclamation reiterated; and none but females remained. In solemn step, and reverential awe, the lovely group advanced, headed by the beautiful Amine, the Rajah's niece, whose father he had murdered and whose throne he had usurped. Already had the High Priest bestowed his benediction, already had the nymphs laid aside their milkwhite robes, and were about to enter the sacred bath, when a hideous overgrown tiger sprung furious from the wood, and fastened with avidity on the companions of Amine. Terror and dismay instantly prevailed; nothing was heard but the loud shrieks and groans of the agonized females; the gong ceased to sound, and the priests precipitately fled to a place of shelter; whilst the fair assemblage of the beauteous Hindoos were pent by the monster in a nook of land which projected into a deep part of the river.

In this dreadful state of suspense, their piercing outcries attracted the notice of the two friends on their return from hunting and learning the cause from a fugitive priest, they hurried with the speed of lightning to the relief of their fair countrywomen. In an instant they alighted from their coursers; and whilst Akajah plunged his javelin in the side, the daring Sammael severed the head from the monster's huge carcase. They then, knowing the prohibition, remounted, and quickly fled.

For this trespass, they were, however, summoned before the Grand Divan of the Rajah. The court was unusually crowded; and the prisoners were brought forward. A deathlike silence prevailed, when the High Priest, rising from his seat, accused the heroes of sacrilege, infidelity, and apostasy. The other priests, to cloak their cowardice, joined in the accusation; and sentence of death was pronounced on the undaunted friends, and amid a general murmur of disapprobation. The Rajah would not hear anything in their defense, and ordered them to be led to immediate execution; but the executioner was fled; and being of the blood royal, no inferior class could, agreeable to the inviolable laws of Hindoostan, spill their blood. In this dilemma, the Rajah, pretending to relent, caused it to be made known, that the one which would shoot three arrows at, and afterwards behead the other, should receive a free pardon. With an avidity not to be expressed, Akajah embraced the offer, was unbound and received his arms. He bent his bow, and, with a poisoned arrow, seemingly prepared to murder his friend; when turning toward the Rajah, he thus addressed him: "Prince, 'tis at your command my bow is bent; at your command must this arrow fly, and rid the world." "Shoot," cried the Rajah, interrupting him with impatience. At that instant, having secretly taken aim, he let fly, and the Rajah fell lifeless on the throne. With eagerness the guards rushed forward to seize Akajah; but perceiving the Rajah already dead, they shrunk back dismayed; whilst Akajah, drawing his scymitar, with a loud voice commanded silence, and thus spake: "Ye sages and brave warriors of Hindoostan, to longer grieve for a tyrant whose hour, though long delayed, has at length arrived. Divine Justice, and a dreadful retribution, has overtaken him. Descended from the rightful possessors of the throne, I claim my right, and invite the fair Amine to partake of the same, vacated by an insolent imperious usurper." The divan, no longer under the impulse of terror, acknowledged the claim, and unanimously placed Akajah and Amine on the throne.

Sammael, now no longer a sacrilegious traitor, they appointed generalissimo of the troops; whilst the High Priest retired, deposed and disgraced, to mourn his bigotry and hypocrisy with unavailing tears. The dead carcase of the Rajah was exposed to the tigers of the woods; tranquillity was restored to the government; and a guard was appointed to protect the fair bathers from any such accident in future, as that which threatened such fatal consequences, but which eventually produced so fortunate and just an occurrence.

A Horrifying Tale of the Sea

The Latvian

By HERMAN FETZER

WE WERE sitting in the cool dining room of an Occidental club at Tokyo, enjoying the tinkling of tall thin glasses and the soothing gelidity of our highballs.

Knowlton, a slight young man with a moustache, who was gathering material in the Orient for a series of financial articles, was making a droll story out of an adventure he had when he once strolled through a pasture with a girl and a guitar.

"She had a red hat," he was saying, "and the bull saw it. Before I knew what was happening, he was heading for us, snorting like a mad schoolma'am.

"What did I do?

"I picked up my guitar and ran. The girl got to the fence about the time I did, but she got there without any help from me.

"I saved my guitar and myself. The incident showed me that I was fonder of song than I was of woman."

Drucamp, a plump little old man with an absurd pair of whiskers, broke into the laugh:

"You should have played your guitar. They say that music hath charms to soothe the savage beast."

"Congreve wrote it 'the savage breast,' I think," said my friend Maclou, the wanderer. "He might as well have said one as the other.

"I have often wondered whether he knew how mysterious and strange a truth he was speaking, or whether he was just getting off a line that sounded good to him.

"Do you care to hear a story somewhat different from Knowlton's which proves the power that music has over what Drucamp has called the savage beast?"

There was acquiescence in the general turning toward the speaker. He was a man of forty with a spare, dark face and a body as slender and hard as an iron rod. Two of us at least—Knowlton and I—knew that he had been captain of a rum-running fleet off New Jersey; that he had smuggled cognac from Cuba into the sponge beds off the coast of Florida for the sponger fishers of Tarpon Springs to find; that he had performed mysterious errands for the King of Siam and that his adventures in the Gobi desert had been the subject of a thrilling narrative by a famous author.

He spoke but seldom of the incidents of his life—the man who has had much excitement does—and he usually preferred listening to talking when there was conversation at the table.

The power upon him of the story he was to tell was obvious. As it progressed, his hands clenched and unclenched and his eyes looked through the fragile walls of the club, far into some magical territory of which we knew nothing.

"Perhaps," he began, "you have heard—but no; I'll start the story farther back than that.

"I was standing on the deck of an auxiliary sloop moored to a wharf in New Orleans, when I noticed the most dejected figure I have ever seen. It was the figure of a man, well-built, dressed in the outfit of a Russian sailor.

"The figure struck me because it was so downcast. You have seen men down and out along the beaches of the South Seas, and here in the Orient, and you know how far into despair a man can go. This man arrested my attention by his dejection—and I was used to waterfront bums. You can see that it must have been bad.

"His clothes, as I say, pointed him out to be a Russian, but the fine features were more those of a Pole. I decided, on second thought, that the man must be a Lithuanian, because his eyes were fair and his skin, in spite of the marks of exposure, was as delicate as a baby's.

"While I was watching, a policeman took him in tow. The man protested vigorously; waved his hands and talked in broken English, but the cop was obdurate. He took him away.

"THE sight of the Latvian started me on a train of thought. I had been in Lithuania once, in the government of Kovno. The mission that took me there is of no importance to the story. What I remembered, as I stood there on the deck of my sloop, was that I had watched the worship of trees in a little village at the edge of a long marsh.

"You have read of the tree-worshippers, and perhaps you have seen some queer rituals here in the East. I have seen fanatics shove saw-toothed swords through their bowels in a temple in Egypt, and I have seen the American Indians in New Mexico crunch scorpions in their teeth and swallow rattlesnakes alive. It was horrible and fascinating, but the most powerful thing I have ever seen was the worship of a gnarled oak tree there in that Latvian village.

"There was none of the crazy nastiness of the rituals I have mentioned. It was all in silence at the start, with the Krive-Kriveyto, the priest of priests, standing at the foot of the sacred tree, gnarled and ancient as the oak itself, his knotted arms and his bundled fists raised over his head, which he threw back till his dry skull rapped on his vertebrae.

"They brought sacrifices to the tree—and one of the things they sacrificed I will not mention even among such sophisticated men as you. But it was beautiful and solemn and glorious, and at the end there was a whispering in the leaves of the tree, and an eerie whispering broke out among the worshippers. They were talking with the tree—talking its own language!

"In the two weeks or so that I spent there, I heard much that I have forgotten now, and much that I never understood. The talk of the people was as thick with mysticism as you will find the air at certain towns of Wales and certain villages of India. I gathered

---

[*AUTHOR'S NOTE: Incredible as it may seem, the events chronicled in this story have their foundation deep in the soil of fact. The police of the city of New York, during the summer of 1923, encountered two persons, both of them Latvians, who understood the mysterious art to which this story has reference. If there is one among you who doubts, I beg only that he will do me the justice of reviewing that doubt someday while he stands before the Hindu in the sideshow, while the Oriental charms hooded cobras with the music of his reed-flute.*]

that certain of the people were known as "The Favorite Children"—of the oak, of course—and that they had mysterious powers over the dead and living things of the marsh and forest.

"I was kindly treated in that place, and because of the hospitality of his countrymen I wanted to do something for the poor Lithuanian whom I had seen standing so dejected at the wharf. I knew that something epically tragic was happening to him; I was young and perverse, I wanted a hand in it.

"I left the sloop to the charge of my mate and followed the policeman and his prisoner. They reached the city prison two blocks ahead of me. The police in New Orleans are not fastidiously accommodating but I knew a word or two that softened the heart of the desk sergeant, and I was admitted to the range where the Lithuanian was jailed.

"He refused to talk to me. He shook his head and muttered. When I pulled a roll of bills from my pocket and said, 'Out?' his face brightened a little, but he relapsed into melancholy despair. I was determined to help him, though, and I offered to place a cash bond for him. The desk sergeant accepted it, and I left the station with my protege in tow.

"For all he knew, I suppose, I was another policeman—or something worse. His face didn't light up until I landed him on the deck of the sloop, and then he looked curiously at me.

"'Ven you go?' he asked.

"'When do you want?'

"'Qvick,' he panted. 'Qvick.'

"There was no point in my staying; I was leaving some time that day anyhow, and I was inclined to do as he asked. So we put off, and when we got out into the bay, he came to me and put himself on his face before me, trying to kiss my shoes.

"I picked him up.

"'What was the hurry, brother?' I asked.

"His English was terrible, and I won't try to mimic it. But I made out that a Chinese hatchetman was following him because of something he had done in Pell Street, and that the delay of a few hours would have meant his death. He asked my name, and I told him, and he engraved it with the point of a safety-pin into the flesh of his forearm.

"I had seen that before. A Chinese by the name of Nun Chang Ng wrote my name on his arm once, and about a year later a yellow Greek who was jumping from a balcony to my back in Salonika died in the air—a bullet in his heart.

"We put in at Tampa a few days later, and my Lithuanian left me to join a tramp bound for Rio Janiero. Before he left he gave me a tarnished talisman with an oak tree engraved on it (I lost it the next day) and he prophesied that we would meet again.

"'You haf save me,' he said. 'Some day maybe I'm gif you what you gif me.'

"I forgot him.

"Three years later I found him in Singapore, watching for a job. I needed a man, and he was ready to serve me.

"I must explain the situation to you.

"I was carrying out the commission of a New England banker whose wife wanted a Hindu room in her palace in Vermont. The man was disgustingly wealthy, and what his wife said went. They weren't going to do the thing in a cheap way; they were going to get their stuff out of some genuine Hindu temple. They were willing to pay whatever it cost, and when they discovered that the stuff they wanted couldn't be bought, they decided to have it anyhow.

"And so the stuff was taken out of a down-country principality of India, and it was brought to me in Singapore, one jump ahead of the emissaries of the priest of the temple. The emissaries had orders to negotiate only after the stuff was back in the temple. It was dangerous business, but exhilarating.

"My job was to get the stuff to a little island in the East Indies. Somebody else was to carry it away from there.

"I had been waiting a month before the stuff reached me, and I was eager to sail.

"THE CRAFT with which I had supplied myself was the crankiest, foulest old tub that you can imagine. I bought her because I was low in funds, because she was cheap, and because she would suffice for the work I had to do. I didn't want to be seen around Singapore with too nice a boat. There were reasons that I won't need to go into.

"I had her from a tramp captain; she was too old and soaked and rickety for his purposes. She ran against my taste, but I knew she would do. I expected no trouble at all at sea; if I had any apprehensions it was concerning what I would find at the appointed island.

"I knew that we would be chased, but I figured that the priest's men would try to learn my destination and beat me there, rather than chase a day or two behind me across the water. I knew very well that there was a chance of their finding out whither I was bound. Such things have mysterious ways of getting abroad.

"So the looks of my craft didn't matter, and I judged her to be capable of what speed we needed. As long as it was humanly possible to live and navigate in her, she would have to do. As I say, I had small choice.

"When I got her she was lousy with rats. They were nasty, but I did not consider them especially important. I set my men to cleaning up the boat as much as possible during our weeks of waiting, but there was little use.

"On the day the treasure was loaded into my hold, a new swarm of the rats set sail for us from the rotten base of a nearby wharf, and they boarded us like a band of pirates.

"My men were not ill pleased to sail with the rats. It is more than a waterfront superstition that a vessel that leaves port with rats in her hold goes with the kindest of omens.

"It was a nice omen, but a most unpleasant condition. I did not realize until a day out how thick the pests were. They were eternally underfoot; they were everywhere.

"Fearless as dogs, they were, and their temerity gave them the appearance of tameness. They wouldn't run from a man. I can assure you that it is not an aid to the digestion to sit in a cabin stinking of mould, eating ship's food while a regiment of rats sits at the edges of the room, squatting in a dozen attitudes, watching you masticate your meat.

"We got on familiar terms with them. I gave up trying to reduce the numbers by violent means when it became apparent that killing didn't seem to diminish their numbers.

"There was one malicious old patriarch among them whom I took to be the leader. He had a rabbinical look; gray and hairy as an old ape, and solemn as a mayor at a flag-raising.

"This particular rat, gentlemen, dogged me. He followed me upon the bridge; he was squatting on the floor beside my bunk when I woke in the morning. At first I was amused with him, and often tossed him scraps from my table, which he munched in solemn dignity, never taking his eyes from my face. But at length I grew to hate him. I could not explain to myself why I had fastened my dislike upon so inconsiderable a thing as a rat. Nevertheless, I hated him more than I will ever hate any living thing again—more than I have hated any living thing but one.

"He knew it. His beady eyes, which night or day did not seem to leave my

face were full of glittering mockery. He adopted an attitude of complacent superiority to me, and when he eluded my bullets with an intuition that I will never understand he leered at me with scorn.

"Gentlemen, I shot at that rat a hundred times, and my hatred increased when I became aware of the fact that I could not hit him. It may have been that my anger made my hand unsteady, but I have turned from missing him and drilled a bullet into a mark no bigger than a half dollar, and twice as far away.

"As I had given up trying to rid the ship of his children, I gave up trying to hit the patriarch. I knew that the whole thing was impossible, and I knew that too much tackling of the impossible leads straight to madness. I knew a man who tried for fourteen years to kill a dog, and he went crazy and shot himself. The dog dragged him to his own door.

"MY LATVIAN came to me on the bridge one morning and asked, throwing one thumb in the direction of a rat which was nibbling tentatively at a coil of rope.

"'You want me to kill 'em?'

"'No,' I said. 'It's no use. You go back to your work.'

"He smiled, bowed down to the deck, threw out palms of his hands and went away. I did not suspect then what it was that he meant.

"Because of the rats, our course was impeded. Daily some little thing would go wrong. The rats chewed at everything, and it was no wonder that things broke at the least strain. It was more by vexation than by delay that we were hindered. My men grew nervous under the irritation of the rodents; they talked of nothing else. Almost any other crew would have given trouble to its master. Anxious to end the trip that was growing so distasteful, my men tried to expedite matters, and in their haste they caused more delays, and added to the multiplicity of things which fretted us.

"And so there was a general feeling of relief on the evening that preceded the day we expected to sight our island. I alone was a little worried. A vague premonition had taken charge of my mind, and I glanced back along our wake too often.

"In the piercing light which comes just before darkness, I saw a sail behind us.

"My presentiment became a positive worry. The island was not in the path of the run of sea traffic, or we would certainly never have chosen it as a rendezvous. I had not counted on seeing a ship for three days before we reached it.

"The more consideration I gave the identity of the boat, the more firmly I was convinced that we were its goal; that it bore the infuriated fanatics whom the priest of the ravished temple had sent to bring back the stolen treasures.

"'How could they know?' I wondered, but in my heart I knew that intelligence has strange channels of transmission in the Orient.

"There was a dead silence on the water, and the splash of our own procedure was the only relief to the ear. The setting sun beat a long red welt into the breast of the sea, and the dreaded sail stuck up over the horizon like the fin of a leviathan.

"I ordered my men to put themselves in readiness for trouble, and at the moment of my speaking the sun popped into the water, and darkness gathered with the speed of an epidemic. All night I watched, but there was nothing to see and nothing to hear. Long before the dawn I found myself trying to persuade my heart that my suspicions were groundless—that the sail concerned me in no way at all—a tramp off its course—smugglers of pearls.

"But the first dim light of morning banished these illusions. The vessel stood by, so near that I marveled at the silence with which she had come upon us. We prepared for defense.

"You understand, of course, that we carried no ordnance. I think the recoil of one piece would have jarred that groaning churn apart. Besides, we wanted whatever appearance of innocence we could summon. The temptation in our hold would have upset the chastity of a warship.

"We were armed with automatic pistols and carbines, and most of my men were fond of knives.

"I am partial to knife-men, gentlemen. They are clean and they fight in the open. A gun-man is the lowest form of life; he lurks in a doorway and shoots into the back. The knife-man fights his enemy knee to knee, and his blade is part of his body.

"Our first message from the temple crusaders was a ball across our bow in the sweet old pirate style. We made no answer. I knew they would not try to subdue us with cannon. It would have been too dangerous to the sacred jewels of the provincial deity whose property they were replevining.

"There was no need of an attempted flight. A glance would have shown the greenest landsman that she had twice our speed. We stood by to fight when the boarders should come, and, to be truthful, I was not greatly concerned. The worry of the night had given way to the actuality of the dawn, and battle was better than suspense. I knew the temper of my men as well as I knew the temper of my own blade; I had tried the blade and the men before.

"We waited until the first boatload of little men was almost under our rail before we riddled them with lead. Our first round must have accounted for half the boat's personnel. But before we shot again, three other boats had put out, and more were being lowered.

"'One boat at a time,' I directed, and my men nodded.

"IT MUST have been Hell itself in those open boats, clearly exposed to our fire, perfect targets. We emptied two of them completely. But there was no dismaying the brown devils that were heading over the dimpled waters on that sparkling morning. They were not fighting for glory or gold or the love of fighting. They were fighting for the love of a god, and there is no bullet which stops such men.

"They swarmed up our sides at a half-dozen places almost simultaneously, and our decks were red.

"Side by side with me, in the horrid phantasma of battle, there moved a fighting shadow, protecting me, seconding me, keeping always with me. I knew, without looking, that it was my Latvian, keeping his pledge.

"At the first contact of fighting, the rats disappeared. Down the hatches they went, like roaches scurrying into a crack when one turns a light upon them. I recall a feeling of relief in the thought that in the fighting, at least, we would not be troubled by them.

"Gentlemen, I have fought much, and there is such a thing as pleasant battle, but that was not. It was like being thrown into a cistern filled solid with flies. The brown fanatics were on all sides of us. They fought with knives, and a few had old-fashioned firearms, but it was with their numbers that they fought principally. Many of them fell, but they were choking our defense as one may choke a mill by throwing too much wheat into it. An almost interminable stream of them came over our gunwales.

"Vaguely, I wondered that so small a vessel could hold so many men.

"The bright arc of a knife flying end over end loomed swiftly up before me, and the shadow which had been at my side sprang before me and crumpled. My Latvian was down.

"At almost the same time there was a stinging pain, cold as ice, upon my right shoulder, and I ceased knowing. There was only the troubled consciousness of terrible pain.

"The scene that impressed itself on my sight when I opened my eyes made me shut them again, immediately. It was too horrible for words. I have seen dirty messes here and elsewhere, but this turned my stomach and made me ill. Nausea added itself to my troubles. In that glance I had seen the deck unpopulated by a standing being, but torn bodies lay about like chips on a woodpile.

"I judge, as I lay there with closed eyes, that my unconsciousness had lasted some time. I had no fear of death, nor did it occur to me that my wounds were fatal. In those days it did not enter my mind that I might ever die. I am warier now, and one of these days I may settle down on a fairy farm.

"I considered, as I say, that much had happened since I had fallen unconscious. I knew that the Hindu crusaders would lose no time in transferring the treasure to their own ship, and—valuable as it was—one boat could easily have carried it.

"It developed that I was right. In a moment I heard the crunching noise of feet walking upon the blood-sodden, prostrate bodies. My ears told me that horrible work was going on. They were despatching all signs of life that appeared among the men on the deck. I tore open my eyes and beheld such horror as turns a man gray. There were two of them who were armed with cruel, curly knives, and one who gave directions. The latter had rolled over the body of one of his own men with his foot and was pointing at the throat. The poor wretch who had been a comrade of the headsman a half-hour before pleaded with his eyes and with his choking voice. The scimitars flashed, and blood spurted. . . The man without a scimitar was turning over another body with his foot. They were not sparing their own men. They were killing all the wounded!

"It was diabolical uncanny; blood-freezing.

"They were near me, and I tried with my last ounce of strength to resist the fate that I knew was coming. I succeeded in dragging myself to my elbow, but I fell back again, powerless but awake, my eyes open.

"The movement attracted them to me, and two scimitars flashed upward before my eyes. But the man who bore no blade held up a retarding hand, and the knives remained poised. His throat was guttural with a coarse negative, and he pointed with a smile of obscene satisfaction to the open hatches.

"The rats were coming back. They poured out of the ship's interior and went daintily among the bloody corpses.

"THE two executioners smiled and acquiesced with their eyes. The officer smiled into my eyes; he had seen my helplessness. Gentlemen, I might throw this table through yonder window with less effort than I exerted in an attempt to raise my hands, but they lay still on the deck beside me. The three Hindus were climbing over the rail. They were gone. There was the splash of oars, and I knew that we were deserted—such of us as were still alive—to the mercy of the rats.

"The horror of it turned me cold, and a clammy sweat mingled with the blood on my body.

"Over the fallen, mangled men came the rats, thicker than flies on a paper.

"They came and sat on my chest, the gray patriarch whom I had hated, and the hatred that existed between us was in his eyes as he leered into my face and minced his horrid mouth.

"I wished for the clean sweep of a blade, for the descent of a sudden bolt of lightning. The death that looked at me out of the eyes of that rat, and the death that surrounded me on all sides was too hideous to contemplate. But no mercy came.

"I turned my eyes in my aching skull to look for my Latvian. He lay beside me, and I thought he must be dead. But as if my gaze restored him, he became conscious, falling at once back into a stupor.

"How long I lay there in the grip of that cold, damp panic I cannot say. It had the qualities of a century and of a moment. There was nothing to break the nasty silence but the lapping of the waves, and the petulant squeaking of the rats.

"I became aware that my Latvian was conscious again, and I looked to him for understanding and sympathy. The gray rat still sat on my chest, biding his time. There is a language of the eyes, gentlemen. At the moment my Latvian turned his blood-spattered face in my direction, the gray rat stepped daintly upon my chin, and nuzzled my cheek with the nose of a connoisseur.

"The Latvian's face went chalky with horror when he saw what was to happen. With a grievous effort that contorted his face he turned on his side, and began crawling.

"A great disgust and a cold hatred for his ingratitude overcame me when I saw that he was crawling away from me. I wished that he might die before I died, that I might see the work of the rats upon him.

"He was going painfully, slowly, toward the rail. With a prodigious effort he grasped it, and with a strength that I have never seen equaled in the will of any man he dragged himself to a standing position, supporting himself by the rigging.

"Glancing toward me with a pride that hurt worse than my wounds, he twisted his face into an absurd gesture, and whistled. A sense of the incongruity of his action possessed me, and I wanted to laugh. The result was only a greater sickness.

"He whistled again, and the strain which issued from his pursed lips was eerie and miraculous. It carried me back suddenly to the little village at the edge of a long marsh in Kovno; to the priest of priests beneath the sacred tree, and the whispering of the oak. Dissimilar as they were, there was a cousinship between the whistling of the wounded Latvian at the rail and the whispering which had passed between the worshippers and the tree to which they prayed.

"Knowlton, you have lain under a tree on your back beside some peaceful brook in Ohio, and you have called up the bob-whites by imitating their whistle. You have heard men lure crows into ambuscade by croaking upon a reed. You have all seen the charmer call the hooded cobra harmless out of his basket. But you have never seen the like of what I saw. You have read it, perhaps, in the bad rhymes of a good poet, but you have never seen it. Nor had I, but while I watched with my heart thumping like the fist of the watch, I recalled certain cryptical things which my hostess in Kovno had said of the mysterious powers held by 'The Favorite Children.'

"For those rats lifted up their heads at the first sound of that whistle, and at the second bar they turned and walked, with gladness in the motion of their bodies, toward the whistling Latvian.

"From the far sides of the deck they came, hurrying to answer the call which he knew. It was such a strain of music as made magic in the heart, the strain he whistled, over and over. Belated rats came out of the hatches, and there was a scampering above and below of rats which were coming.

"Last of all there left my chest the gray old rat which I had hated, and which hated me. He went with many a

glance backward at me, and there was regret in his buttony eyes.

"When they had gathered before him in chorus—hundreds and hundreds of rats, sitting on their tails on the bloody bodies, waving their forefeet up and down and wagging their heads—my Latvian made a feeble wave of his hand to me and looked me in the eyes. There was triumph and a great gladness in his look. He let go of the rigging, and slumped over the rail. The rats followed him, and the water hissed as they dived into it. I heard the faint repetition of the call, and in a few moments there was silence. The deck was clear of all but the shattered rigging and the mangled bodies.

"It was my Latvian's way of discharging an obligation."

WE around the table came back to our surroundings as men returning from afar. Knowlton was the first to inquire of the sequel.

"The emotions which my Latvian's sacrifice of his life aroused made me faint again, and when I awoke it was to find my mate bending over me, his head bandaged and his voice cheery.

"The three executioners who had been sent back to kill the wounded had done but a little of their work when the more subtle and horrid method suggested itself. With the rats gone, by the grace of my Latvian's mystical powers and great gratitude, we had a chance. Those who were less badly wounded were up and caring for themselves in a few hours. They took me to my cabin, and we sighted our island the next day."

Drucamp shivered.

"Those damned rats are running up and down my spine this minute," he said. "Let's have another drink."

Extraordinary Instance of Second Sight

A GENTLEMAN connected with the family of Dr. Ferriar, an officer in the army and certainly addicted to no superstition, was quartered early in life, in the middle of the last century, near the castle of a gentleman in the north of Scotland, who was supposed to possess the second sight. Strange rumours were afloat respecting the old chieftain; he had spoken to an apparition, which ran along the battlements of the house, and had never been cheerful afterwards: his prophetic vision excited surprise even in that region of credulity, and retired habits favored the popular opinion. One day while the officer was reading a play to the ladies of the family, the chief, who had been walking across the room, stopped suddenly, and assumed the look of a seer: he rang the bell and ordered the groom to saddle a horse, to proceed immediately to a seat in the neighborhood, and to inquire after the health of Lady ———; if the account were favorable, he then directed him to call at another castle, to ask after another lady whom he named. The reader immediately closed his book, and declared that he would not proceed till these abrupt orders were explained, as he was confident they were produced by the second sight. The chief was very unwilling to explain himself, but at length he owned that the door had appeared to open, and that a little woman, without a head, had entered the room; that the apparition indicated the sudden death of some person of his acquaintance, and the only two persons who resembled the figure were those ladies after whose health he had sent to inquire.

A few hours afterwards the servant returned, with an account that one of the ladies had died, of an apoplectic fit, about the time when the vision appeared.

At another time the chief was confined to his bed by indisposition, and my friend was reading to him, in a stormy winter night, while the fishing boat belonging to the castle was at sea. The old gentleman repeatedly expressed much anxiety respecting his people, and at last exclaimed—"My boat is lost!" The colonel replied, "How do you know it, sir?" He was answered, "I see two of the boatmen bringing in the third drowned, all dripping wet, and laying him down close beside your chair." The chair was shifted with great precipitation; in the course of the night the fishermen returned, with the corpse of one of the boatmen.

Miracles

A TRUE miracle, performed by Dr. Connell, of Bunno, in the county of Cavan, in the year 1777. In the year 1773, about the month of February, a girl of the name of Anne Mulligan, who lived near Roxberry, and who was about fourteen years of age, went over to a neighbor's house on a visit one evening, and returned about ten o'clock at night, having completely lost her speech, and remained in that state till May, 1777, being a space of four years and about a quarter, when her friends brought her to Dr. Connell, generally called the "mad doctor," who, when he had examined the girl and heard the story, brought her into his parlor, and locked the door. Then placing her on a chair on one end of the table, and himself opposite to her at the other, he commenced by distorting his countenance in a shocking manner, so as to strike terror into the girl, and after some time he furiously bounced up, flew to a dagger, which was hanging over the chimney-piece, ran at the girl, swearing he would instantly put her to death, when she dropped on her knees, and exclaimed for God's sake to spare her life, and immediately fainted. On her recovering from the faint, she had completely regained her speech, nor ever after lost it. This can be attested by about twenty persons, and by the tradition of the whole neighborhood.

The Machine from Outside

By DON HOWARD

MEN call me mad. Perhaps I am, now, but then—before that succession of terrible events—I was at least as sane as the average person. Now the sight of a flame, a red color, or the slightest unusual sound paralyzes my reason with fear and conjures up old memories that haunt me night and day. Then I was normal, aside from the fact that my life was guided and, I pride myself, guided well, by premonition, a mysterious sixth sense that had never failed to warn me correctly. When I did not heed it disaster invariably followed, but never more swiftly and horribly than that winter night.

It was dark, moonless. The stars danced with an unnatural brilliance at the zenith, winking like signal fires portending some dreadful event. I was walking across the silent snowfields that stretched endlessly in every direction. —But were they silent?—A low sound reached my ears, a rushing noise like waves beating on a distant shore. A faint luminous glow spread over the sky and a gigantic shadow of my body was thrown athwart the landscape, a yawning black pit threatening to engulf me.

A giant meteor had swept from the sky. As large as the full moon, but much brighter, it neared the earth, enveloped in a cloud of white vapor and a huge train of sparks trailing in its wake. The light on the snow increased to a blinding glare as the meteor rushed at me with the speed of a rifle bullet. In the hope of escaping annihilation I turned and ran, my way as brilliantly lighted as by a noon-day sun. The roar culminated in a terrific explosion as the meteor crashed to earth just beyond the next rise. Darkness threw a smothering shroud over the scene.

The force of the impact had thrown me to the ground. I could scarcely breathe in the pall of sulphurous vapor that enveloped me. Gasping, I rose to my feet and looked around. The stars had been blotted out and the only light visible was a fire that glowed darkly in the supernatural fog. The sparks had started a blaze in a nearby grove of trees.

A dark form loomed up before me as suddenly as if it had been materialized from the cloud itself and I heard a familiar voice speaking.

"Hello, is that you, Jackson?" and then seeing that his recognition was correct, "Wasn't it wonderful?"

"Wonderful!" I exclaimed, "Do you mean that for humor, Dr. Sarntoff?"

"Most assuredly not. Why, Jackson, this is the most extraordinary scientific event I have ever seen."

I might have known it. Dr. Sarntoff was one of those brilliant scientists whose imagination had not been quenched by cold-blooded reason. His work, therefore, was little known in scientific circles where fact and theory must be so skilfully intermingled as not to be easily detected. Sarntoff was unusual. Most men would have called him eccentric, and even at this moment he presented a strange figure. Hatless and coatless, he utterly disregarded the bitter night chill. His collar was slightly awry under his iron-gray beard and his cheeks were flushed from excitement. His small blue eyes were flaming under their bushy brows.

"It must be a gigantic meteorite!" he exclaimed, "And on my property too. What luck!"

He started off on a wild scramble toward the fire, I following somewhat dubiously although he assured me that the danger was past. The warmth of the fire did little to relieve my depressed spirits. I felt that nothing good could possibly come from this incident. It was too weird, too ghastly, too supernatural.

A moment later we stood at the edge of a pit some ten feet in diameter. The snow had vanished from its sides and a faint haze of steam rose from its depths. The inner walls were hot to the touch.

"This is where the meteor lies," said Sarntoff.

"Well," I answered cynically, "it can lie there for all I care. A chunk of metal from another star is no different from that we can mine here."

"I'm not so sure," he replied, "I've been experimenting for years with meteoric iron and I've found traces of a new metal, not unlike manganese, but upon which acids and heat have little effect. This huge meteor will give me the opportunity I've longed for."

I was not disposed to a scientific discussion. Such things usually bore me and tonight I was unnerved and anxious to return home. Sarntoff, nevertheless, continued to elaborate.

"If I can prove there is such a metal and discover its properties we may be able to find it here on the earth. Think of its practical applications! Why, man, it would be one of the most valuable finds of the age."

He stopped as I yawned audibly. What cared I about this new metal? Probably it was some fiction of Sarntoff's too vivid imagination. But then I did not know.

I SLEPT fitfully through the night. The next morning found me so feverish and exhausted that my physicians recommended a complete rest at the seashore. They said I was on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Although I did not see Sarntoff again for more than four months, I followed as well as possible the history of the meteor as it was given in the newspapers.

When Sarntoff recovered it from the pit it was found to weigh more than five tons. A dozen museums and a thousand private collectors bid fabulous sums to induce him to sell it. For a month it was on exhibition at his home until Sarntoff made the announcement that set the scientific world awry. The next day he would start dissolving the meteor to test for the unknown metal.

The collectors arose in a body. Destroy irreparably this magnificent scientific relic? They pleaded with Sarntoff, begged, chided, scolded, threatened, and finally obtained an injunction through the courts forbidding him to continue his experiments. A month and a half of wrangling passed before Sarntoff won a complete victory. The jury had decided that the meteor was his own property and that he could use it as he wished.

Several weeks later I received a telegram.

"COME TO ME AT ONCE MOST EXTRAORDINARY DEVELOPMENT CONCERNING METEOR—
SARNTOFF"

I obeyed with misgivings. My nerves had not yet recovered from the shock of close contact with that meteor. In my dreams I could hear it hissing by, feel

its heat on my face, and would wake up trembling with fear. The slightest humming noise of any sort was enough to make me sick with dread. This specter haunted me night and day but nevertheless I returned.

Sarntoff greeted me excitedly and pulled me toward his laboratory without giving me a chance even to remove my coat. His appearance was enough to startle anyone. I doubt if he had seen sleep inside of a week. His hair had become a shade whiter, but his blue eyes were dancing wildly in his florid face like bubbles of water on a red-hot stove. Could pseudo-science have driven the man mad?

"What is the meaning of all this, Sarntoff," I asked, glancing askance at the disordered laboratory which confronted me.

"Never mind this mess," he said, "look into that vat. There is the most wonderful machine—"

"Everything you see is 'The most wonderful,' " I interrupted, gazing into the huge built-in trough. It was full of an evil-smelling acid and small bubbles of gas that rose from the depths. For a moment I could see nothing. Sarntoff switched on a light. Vaguely I glimpsed the outlines of some framework, yes, a machine, but of such an ethereal nature that it seemed scarcely more substantial than the bubbles which floated from it.

"Some new invention of yours?" I asked.

"No, Jackson," he said in a queer voice that thrilled me to my finger-tips. "It was crystallized in that meteor!"

Astonished, I grasped him by the shoulder and, I warrant, shook him more violently than the occasion called for.

"You can't mean that!" It was an exclamation rather than a question.

"Yes. I put the meteor in that vat of acid so that all the soluble matter would disappear. This beautiful engine is the residue."

My eyes were now more accustomed to the darkness. I could see the machine plainer. In shape it approximated a cube two feet in each dimension. The thread-like stays were as lustrous as burnished silver and wound around each other, in and out, like a queer sort of spider-web waiting to catch its prey. My heart grew cold within me. My sense of danger had warned.

An idea came to me. "Perhaps this is no machine but only the crystalline structure of your new metal that takes on this strange shape."

Sarntoff's answer was brief.

"Look closer."

I did so, and found that within the threads was a system of small wheels and gears, so complicated that the whole affair was a maze of intricate interlacings.

"What is its purpose?"

"It is my aim to find that out," he replied quietly.

I could sympathize with Sarntoff. His was the mind that rose beyond all difficulties. No doubt in his imagination, this engine was some affair that would solve the mystery of the universe, complete the knowledge of the human race, or provide a source of power far beyond human concept. To me it was only an instrument of death, dark and sinister. I confided my fears to Sarntoff.

"It's a devil engine! A machine from outside. We had better leave it alone."

"Nonsense, Jackson. If it were built by the devil himself it would only add to its scientific interest."

Though still unconvinced, I turned the conversation into other channels while Sarntoff and I sat up late into the night discussing the different angles this affair had taken. I advised informing the newspapers.

"No!" he exploded, "I'll not have another gang either of those inquisitive journalists or those meddling scientists up here."

I dropped the point. Sarntoff's claim to secrecy was justified.

"Think of what this all means, Jackson. A machine from another world. It proves that intelligent, perhaps super-intelligent life exists somewhere else in this universe."

"On Mars?"

"I have an idea that it came from something far beyond. The chemical composition was different from any other meteor I have ever examined as was its crystalline structure. It was more like the pig-iron from our blast furnaces than a meteor."

"Perhaps it is a fake, then. A hoax. I know what it is—a publicity stunt for 'The Meteor,' that successful play of the year."

Sarntoff, disgusted at my flippancy, waned into a silence that was not broken for many minutes. When he did speak the cloud on his florid face had vanished. Excitedly he sat up.

"I have a probable explanation for it now! The metal of this machine will withstand high temperatures. After it was finished, the iron was flowed in on top of it. Perhaps the whole affair is a torpedo shot at us by some distant planet, the machine being the explosive part."

And thus for a week we theorized, while Sarntoff and I labored night and day at the devil engine, as I had come to call it. The acids had to be carefully washed from it until finally it stood clean and dry on the floor of the vat. We dared not move it though it seemed to possess great stability. There it lay, as bright and shining as a dewy cobweb. It scintillated like a diamond and its jeweled radiance so fascinated me that I would gaze into its depths for hours, lost in thought. Only a crystal gazer could have appreciated the hypnotic force that held me.

"What is it for?" I asked Sarntoff a hundred times a day and I received as many answers as questions. The scientist's imagination was dancing about as much as his flashing blue eyes. He was engrossed in diagraming the gearing.

"Here is something queer," Sarntoff interjected. "Look at the color of the light as it shines through the machine in different directions."

I had noticed the weird pattern before and the beautiful display of colors.

"Jackson, I believe that we are nearing the solution of this problem. In some way this engine decomposes light." He paused to make some calculations. "Yes, the result is exactly the same as if the light were made to move in a curved path through some hyper-space."

I had no idea what he meant, nor did I care. After the first hundred explanations each new one decreased in interest. I gave myself again to gazing into the machine and so completely did I lose all sense of time that it might have been five minutes or five hours until Sarntoff spoke again. He had been pecking the internal workings of the machine.

"Jackson, I have found it! I have found it!" he shouted like a modern Archimedes.

The devil engine gave a slight flutter.

"Hold it down!"

The vibrations of the myriad wheels thrilled me. I was afraid. I desired to let go but some strange fascination held me fixed, like a boy that holds a lighted firecracker in his hand until it is too late.

Sarntoff shouted something at me but his words were lost in the roar that came from the machine's interior. Heavens! Was the world being turned inside out? Was it an earthquake which shook the walls of the building so strongly that the roof seemed about to fly into space? My body was growing numb with the continued vibration. My heart was frozen with the chill of death. Before I entirely lost consciousness I had the sensation of floating away on a sea of clouds, at

first slowly and then more rapidly until my senses gave away under the strain.

"JACKSON, Jackson!" I heard a voice calling out of the darkness which was so intense as almost to smother me. All was silent now. So this was death? But yet I felt as substantial as the solid rock that now supported me. If only I could see! As if in answer to my desire a flame appeared at my side. It was Sarntoff.

"My God! What has happened?" I cried.

"I don't know."

"Where are we?"

"That also I don't know. Look at the sky."

The stars, for the most part, were very faint. The Milky Way was plainly visible, but where were the constellations, the old familiar figures? Not one could be recognized! Where could we be!"

Somewhat unsteadily I gained my feet.

"Can't we find some way to make a light?"

Sarntoff struck another match which shed a dim radiance about us. As far as we could tell, no trees existed on the side of the rocky hill that sheltered us. In lieu of wood we set fire to a handful of dry grass which burned with a red flame, casting a lurid glare on the surrounding scene. The rim of darkness showed no break in the monotony. We fell into an awed silence for we were aware that something unusual had occurred, though what we could not comprehend.

Suddenly I thought of the cursed machine that was responsible for our plight. Reversing it might carry us back. I sought for it with the aid of a match. When I found it a cry of dismay escaped from my lips. The devil engine lay broken upon the ground, its silvery stays torn out as though to release the demon that seemed to govern it. Without new metal repair was out of the question.

The daze that clouded my brain began to vanish, and my fears, dulled for an instant by a sense of the unusual, stabbed again at my heart. Nothing but death could be the outcome. And such a death. Slow starvation in this utter darkness.

"My God, Sarntoff! What can we do?"

"Wait," was his philosophical reply.

I was on the verge of insanity but a sudden purple radiance that glowed on the horizon filled me with a new hope—dawn!

Silently we watched the sun rise. The purple aureole gave place to a vivid rose which rapidly covered the entire sky. If the world were to have caught on fire in one moment the color could have been no more ruddy. No blue in this atmosphere! The sun was a brilliant white, too dazzling for conception. I noticed that it did not appear exactly round and presently the reason for this became apparent. It was extended by the attraction of a second sun which suddenly launched itself into the sky. Impossible as it may seem only one explanation was admissible. We were cast away without hope of escape on a planet revolving about a double star!

Sarntoff was so wildly excited that he stuttered when he addressed me.

"At first I thought that the devil engine might have carried us through time and that we might be still on the earth some centuries removed. But now I see that we have been carried through space as well. You see, Jackson, that we're a long way from where we started."

"Through time! Through space! What are you talking about?" I demanded, struggling to understand.

"Well, very evidently this machine has carried us over trillions of miles!"

"In that short space of time? Impossible!"

"Don't be foolish, Jackson, we have done it. But don't try to imagine us flying up that distance. We surely didn't do that."

"How did we get here, then?"

"If I'm right, it's rather complicated to put into simple language. It means only that the world has four instead of three dimensions."

"That sounds like Einstein."

"Yes. He and other eminent investigators have shown us that our conceptions of space and distance are not always what they seem to be. On earth we know of but three directions, forward, up and to the side. We gauge our distance from a body by the space we must cover in going there in the three recognized dimensions, but it might be infinitely nearer in a fourth direction if one exists."

"I confess that I don't undestand."

"Let me reason by analogy," he replied, "If a man were constrained to live in a sewer-pipe he would know only of the forward and back direction. And if, perchance, the pipe were curved into a second dimension, he might, by crawling for miles, reach a point adjacent to some place he had previously been. If, at that moment, some force could have opened a trap-door he could have made as unbelievable a jump as we ourselves have experienced."

"The devil engine let us in the back way, so to speak?" I questioned.

"Exactly," answered Sarntoff somewhat impatiently. "Here we are, thrown by fate into a new land and you stand there asking foolish questions. I want to see what sort of a place this is."

Our ardor quickly withered at the sight which confronted us.

The lurid glare of the sky was reflected in the features of the planet's surface, red soil, red rock, red everything. But, after all, why should not red be the dominating color somewhere!

"It is only a question of the size of the dust particles in the atmosphere," explained Sarntoff. "On the Earth they scatter the blue light, Here the red."

Simple enough, but why had not Nature wielded a more restful brush when painting the landscape, a delicate green or blue here and there to relieve the monotony of the scarlet splashes. Even the grass, the single form of vegetation that covered the bare earth, was crimson. Sarntoff and I chewed it, finding therein small relief for our hunger as it was very bitter. We quenched our subsequent thirst at a small spring whose water, God help me, was the color of blood, so stained, I realized, by fine dust from the red rocks.

No breeze, no air stirred in this land of death. Could there possibly be inhabitants? And if so, would they be hostile? We longed for, yet dreaded discovery. The silence of a graveyard at midnight persisted even when he had aroused enough courage to send a loud "halloo" echoing from the massive cliffs in the distance. We set out for the highest of these, hoping that from its summit the view of the surrounding country would solve our problem. Perhaps the high-walled canyons might shelter the elusive inhabitants of this strange sphere.

For days we wandered over the face of the planet, chewing bitter weeds and drinking vile water. The rocky crags suddenly refused to give up their secret though they seemed to hover menacingly above us, peering over our heads as if they alone could see that for which we were seeking. The sky remained forever cloudless, though a slight purple haze at dawn was customary but quickly dispelled by the powerful rays of the two suns. Time had been drawing them apart so that now the dreadful nights were much shorter, a condition that was not distasteful to us for their absolute darkness was appalling. It hung over us

like a visible curse, sucking the breath from our bodies as we tried to sleep. I would have given years from my life to have had some natural noise break that eternal silence. A shrieking wind. Falling water. Anything!

As we progressed we noted every landmark, carefully filing them in our memories against the hour of our return. Each day had been a repetition and this was no exception. Slowly and laboriously Sarntoff and I scaled the highest cliff and, of life, found as usual—nothing. In one direction a plain of fire stretched endlessly into the blazing sky with nothing more than a thin purple line of separation. In the other lay the sea, an ocean of blood, whose calm surface, reflecting the heavens, was unruffled by wind or tide, as though it had suddenly congealed in fear and horror. I shut my eyes to obliterate the view, feeling as if I had been thrust into the heart of a blazing furnace, but when I opened them the naked world appeared the same—no sound, no motion.

The descent was even more difficult than the ascent had been and night had thrown its black shroud over us long before we reached the level. We elected to remain in a small cave that offered, if not shelter, at least a foot-hold that would keep us from dashing to the ground thousands of feet below. Making ourselves as comfortable as possible we tried to gain some much needed rest. Sarntoff, the imperturbable, dropped easily to sleep. To me sleep was impossible. Silence! Solitude! An indescribable terror took sudden possession of me. Above Sarntoff's muffled breathing a slight noise, a warning hiss, seemed to float like a vapor from the canyon below.

I listened tensely. It was repeated, increasing in volume, slowly rising to a shrill scream, wailing loudly lke a human being in great agony. The cry echoed from cliff to cliff and continued to re-echo in my consciousness some time after it had died away. Again it came, moaning like the wind in the pines, increasing to a gale until the rocks were shaken by its force.

As though at a signal, a thousand wisps of luminous mist dashed from as many crevices in the canyon walls. One rushed from our own shelter, nearly precipitating me into the depths from fear and from its suddenness. I could not speak nor, I suppose, could Sarntoff. My tongue was swollen with horror. A colony of ghosts in a land of blood and fire! A master's touch to an inferno!

For hours, with wildest confusion, they danced in the canyon. An occasional laugh, like that of a maniac, floated upward. The display of colors was wonderful, all shades of the rainbow—no two exactly alike. At times the phantoms were round, huge, iridescent soap-bubbles, and again shapeless, like phosphorescent mist rising from a dead swamp.

Ages passed. Time in which my consciousness recognized nothing but the myriad clouds of light as they sported in the valley. The weird cry was again repeated. The lights as suddenly vanished and I felt a chill wind strike me as the thing, whatever it was, returned to shelter. A moment later dawn splashed the scene with blood. Sarntoff and I gazed at each other questioningly. Neither spoke of the terror that had gripped our hearts. It was too vague, yet too real to be aught but a part of this dream planet.

Seemingly hours passed before we essayed to move. Sarntoff was the first to speak.

"Look—look at the roof of our cave, Jackson."

Weakly, yet fearfully, I complied. Hanging from it in long shreds was a huge supply of that spun-glass metal from which the devil engine was constructed.

"With this, perhaps we can repair—it?" I did not dare mention *what* for fear that the phantom might hear us and try to thwart our plans for leaving.

"Perhaps," replied Sarntoff. "But not before I solve this unspeakable mystery!"

"The farther I get from it the better," I replied, "and the sooner. I have no desire to spend another night in such a horrible place."

Sarntoff yielded to my wishes, but, after we had gathered a supply of the metal and were moving down the slope, I noticed a queer light in his eyes.

"Has it occurred to you, Jackson, that we might have been sent for?"

"Sent for?" I echoed.

"Yes. Is it not possible that the machine was given us so that we might visit this unexplored land? If so, it seems a shame to leave it."

"Don't let your scientific ardor carry you away, Sarntoff. We'll be lucky if we ever leave. It's going to be no easy task to repair that engine."

"I'm not the least bit hopeful that I'm equal to it," confessed the scientist, "but I'm quite sure that it would be no disappointment to me if I were obliged to spend my life here. The study of this wonderful geology alone would be enough to attract me. It is only for your sake that I'm even considering returning."

"But the hardships, man! And these queer creatures. What assurance have you of their harmlessness. It's a ghastly place, a fit abode for lost souls, and we'll be well rid of it."

FIVE days passed. As our eyes were more accustomed to the darkness, we traveled much during the night and indeed gained comfort by so doing, for then only, under the faint cold light of the distant stars, was the distasteful ruddy glare invisible. How I enjoyed looking upward! The faint glitter of the Milky Way warmed my heart with its companionable ring, the only link to our former life—that past which seemed so like a dream. And which, of those thousand orbs that sparkled in the black velvet depths of heaven, was our sun with its eight attendant planets? I marveled that I should feel such a patriotic thrill when I thought of *Our Earth.*

"Here," I thought philosophically, "is one solution for universal peace. Let those who are so unsatisfied with their own world glimpse it from without and if they will then only say *'Our Earth'* with half the enthusiasm they now say *'Our Country'* they will bring in the millennium."

Sarntoff interrupted my wandering thoughts.

"Here we are, Jackson." And, following his finger through the darkness, I recognized the spot as our landing place.

"The devil engine is gone!"

I rushed to his side.

"The ghosts have stolen it!"

"At least this proves that they are substantial. Ghosts could not move material objects."

I stood aghast—helpless.

"We are too accustomed to think of life as enclosed in a solid form, though even on our earth there are many gelatinous or semi-liquid creatures from the jelly-fish to the amoeba. I do not consider it a big stretch of the imagination to think that beings can be gaseous in form and yet have intelligence."

I was about to argue the point when I saw a dark shadow against a neighboring rock. It proved to be the devil engine.

"And restored to perfect order!" cried Sarntoff.

"By the ghosts!"

"By these people, yes. It goes to prove my point, Jackson, that they have a wonderful civilization. If I only knew how to communicate with them I would remain. There *must* be some way."

"No. No." I interposed hurriedly, fearful that he might change his mind.

Since that memorable event of the canyon we had seen nothing of the weird creatures that inhabited this strange world but the moment I touched the devil engine a faint light appeared. Turning quickly, I found hundreds of the creatures slowly encircling us, gradually filling in the ever narrowing rim of darkness.

"Hurry, Sarntoff!" I shouted. "They'll stop us!"

Sarntoff did not reply as he touched the lever that would reverse the engine, sending it back along the path through which it had come.

I grasped the engine with a new confidence in spite of the dancing bubbles, feeling its vibrations tingling in my brain. A strange glow suddenly seemed to come from the machine's interior. Whether it was reflected light or not I could not say but, in my horror, I fancied that one of the creatures was concealed therein! I cried my conclusion to Sarntoff.

"Nonsense!"

Nevertheless the idea of a machine with a soul—a true devil engine—sported through my consciousness, filling me with a terror as deep as infinity. The machine quivered as though anxious to be off.

That weird cry that drove the spirits to oblivion resounded as dawn's bloody dagger cut through the darkness.

Sarntoff suddenly stood erect, the light of a new resolution burning in his eyes.

"Goodbye, Jackson. Someday I may return."

"Not come with me?"—but it was too late. The words trailed into the vacant ether. My last vision of him will remain painted forever upon my memory and in one color, a stalwart figure silhouetted against a blood-red sky.

For an eternity I floated away as in a dream.

"Crash!" I had struck something hard and a slight explosion followed. I was lying on the floor in Sarntoff's laboratory with a red flame licking at my feet. I fainted.

The next day at the hospital the interne acquainted me with the details.

"A fire at Sarntoff's," he explained. "You were rescued from the midst of the flames."

"And Sarntoff?" I questioned.

"It's queer. His body has not yet been found."

It never was.

National Superstition

AT Genoa, two Venetians, whose countrymen and the Genoese still keep up that inveterate hatred to each other which distinguished their ancestors, were present at an osteria, or wine house, where the conversation of the company arose, not as it would in England, on politics and pleasure, but on the merits of St. John, the protector of Genoa, who, it was asserted, had worked innumerable miracles, and was the greatest of all saints. If nature be so much the parent of patriotism, as to create in us an affection for those minuter objects in our native land, which the citizen of the world would regard with an eye of indifference, how much more powerfully must she operate on our passions, when we remember that on which the prosperity of our country is supposed to depend! The two Venetians were precisely in this predicament. They probably knew as little of St. John, as they did of St. Dennis; but St. Mark was the guardian of Venice and consequently their all in all. Resolved, therefore, to maintain his honor in opposition to this provoking eulogium of the Genoese on their patron, one of them observed, that the bones of his saints had worked more miracles, particularly in healing diseases, than all the apostles and saints; that in heaven he was next in rank to the Virgin and popes; and as much superior to their St. John, as the patriarch of Venice was to be the archbishop of Genoa. To prevent any reply to this, he and his friend left the room; but were soon followed by one of the company, who had the honor of bearing the great cross of a religious order in their church professions. This desperate enthusiast, on overtaking, stabbed the Venetian, who had spoken, to the heart, crying out with the blow, Timanda questo San Giovanne che ti gurlano le osse di San Marco. "St. John sends thee this, that the bones of St. Mark may heal thee." His friend astonished at a deed so bloody, (though an Italian), applied to a magistrate for justice, who having heard the particulars, told him, that had a Venetian murdered a Genoese in Venice, no notice would have been taken of it; but that this complaint would probably be considered in a few days; and so indeed it was, even sooner than he had promised; for early the next morning he too was found assassinated at the door of his apartment.

Death of the Duchess of Bedford

THE Duchess of Bedford, wife to the fifth Duke, and mother to the excellent Lord Russel, died before her husband was advanced to the dukedom. The manner of her death was remarkable. She was well accomplished in mind as well as person; though she was the daughter of Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset, by the dissolute Countess of Essex. But the guilt of her parents, and the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury, had been industriously concealed from her; so that all she knew, was their conjugal infelicity, and their living latterly in the same house without ever meeting. Coming one day into her lord's study, her mind oppressed and weakened by the death of Lord Russel, the Earl being suddenly called away, her eye, it is supposed, was promiscuously caught by a thin folio, which was lettered "Trial of the Earl and Countess of Somerset." She took it down, and turning over some of the leaves, was struck to the heart by the guilt and conviction of her parents. She fell back, and was found by her husband dead in that posture, with the book lying open before her.

Doctor Grant's Experiment

By H. A. NOUREDDIN ADDIS

"SAY," confided the brakeman, leaning over the keen-featured elderly man who sat absorbed in a medical review, "I'm sorry to have to tell you, but your trunk's busted."

A pair of piercing gray eyes sought the brakeman's face.

"Yes," he explained, "whole bottom's loose. Guess I can rustle you a rope, though. You'll need one. If you'd just come up to the baggage car you could see for yourself."

Without a word Dr. Morton Grant arose, and, turning down a page to mark his place in the periodical he was reading—it was an account of the resuscitation of a drowned man—thrust it into an outside coat pocket, and followed the brakeman through the door in the partition that divided the car into smoking and baggage compartments. There was a calm decision that marked his method of handling the medical journal as well as the manner in which he followed the brakeman—a peculiar mannerism that was no less apparent in his most trivial act, even to the closing of the door as he passed through.

Once inside the baggage compartment the brakeman pointed out to Dr. Grant how the entire bottom of his large, heavy trunk was about to burst out. It was easily seen. A large crack spreading both ways from a corner had already extended across the opposite side.

As it was the trunk sat upright. The brakeman, seizing the handle on the damaged end in both hands, demonstrated how the corner gave way on attempting to lift the trunk. Certainly, it could never withstand handling in that condition, and, as the brakeman pointed out, the most convenient way out of the difficulty was to rope it securely.

The trainman bustled about the little baggage compartment for a few moments, bringing to view many little odds and ends accumulated there in the ordinary course of the day's work, finally producing a fairly large coil of light rope such as is often used for cording heavy or insecure pieces of baggage.

"Here, this'll about fill the bill," he remarked, handing the coil to the doctor, and hurrying to the door through which they had entered. "I'll have to get busy now. We've got kind of a bad piece of track ahead. Sorry I can't stay and help you. See you later."

The doctor nodded carelessly and flung the end of the rope across the trunk. Perhaps if nothing had happened then to prevent he would have gone on cording the trunk and finished without taking especial notice of his surroundings. But just as he threw the rope a sudden lurch of the train caused him to stagger and jerk the rope back in a vain attempt to retain his footing, and the next moment he was sitting upon a long, low, narrow box, which, with three others exactly like it, occupied the side of the car opposite a number of trunks, among which was his own.

For a moment the physician sat dazed. Not that he was injured at all, but the sudden, unexpected lurching of the car, together with his rapid efforts to save himself from falling had come so suddenly that his mind had been unable to keep pace with his movements, and he was trying to reconstruct the chain of events that had led up to his finding himself sitting upon the low, narrow box.

In the struggle the doctor had allowed the coil of rope to slip from his grasp, and now he reached forward to retrieve it from the floor, when another violent lurch of the train brought him back to his seat upon the box.

"The brakeman said this was a bad piece of track," he mused with a smile, "I'm inclined to agree with him."

Now for the first time Dr. Grant's attention was drawn by something in the shape and size of the four boxes. He sat for a moment studying them intently, and then a heavy wrecking-bar that lay on the floor nearby impressed itself upon his mind.

Reaching forward he picked up the bar, and inserting it deftly between two of the rough inch-boards that made up the cover of the further box, forced the board from its place.

As he anticipated the opening in the box-top revealed a human body, and, as the opening was near the center, the face was not in evidence, yet from what he could see he realized that the corpse was terribly mangled.

Replacing the board he proceeded to break into and examine one by one the other boxes. The next two revealed human remains even more horribly mangled than the first, but the last, the box on which he had been sitting, contained the body of a large-framed, rather thin, yet healthy-looking man of perhaps thirty-five years of age. He, unlike the others, had escaped mangling. Hastily enlarging the opening the scientist's experienced hands flew over the corpse, tapping here, pressing there, now forcing exploratory fingers deep into soft parts of the body, and again searching with practised eye for bruises or other surface wounds.

But the examination revealed nothing, or next to nothing. A long and ragged, but shallow scalp-wound above the right ear was the only external mark of violence on the body. That, together with the fact that rigor mortis had not set in, inclined Dr. Grant to the opinion that in this case death was due to asphyxiation.

"Must have been that accident at Blair's Crossing," he said to himself. "I was told that there were no deaths. Hoboes, I suppose."

He stood up, looking down thoughtfully at the corpse. "He'd be a fine subject . . . And nobody to crow about it if I failed."

He looked at the broken trunk. "By George! I've a great notion to take a chance. If I only had some rocks to put in this box. Ten to one they never look inside any of them again. Probably only a hobo—no relatives or anything."

The doctor unlocked his trunk and peered inside. The upper tray was filled with clothing; small things—shirts, underclothes, etc. He lifted that out. Below the trunk was packed with books and a typewriter case stood at the broken end. The abnormal weight for a trunk explained the breakage.

THE physician looked at the body which he had drawn from the box, and was now lying on the floor of the car; then looked back at the trunk. "I believe I can do it," he said aloud. He went to the door, studying it a moment, then slipped a catch. "That'll hold 'em out for a little while.

"I hate losing these books, though—and this old typewriter—it's like parting with old friends, but—." A gesture finished the sentence.

To remove the books and typewriter wanted but a moment. Then, seizing the body in his powerful arms, he deposited it in the trunk. The tray would not go in now. He removed the clothing from it and packed it in around the corpse. The tray, he then broke up and threw it in the box from which he had taken the body. Then, grumbling as he did so, he placed the books and typewriter in with the broken tray. "It's heavy enough now," he growled, "but I hate to let that old machine go."

Carefully, so that he would not be heard above the rumble of the train, he nailed up the box that now contained books and typewriter.

Next he removed a worn leather case from his pocket. From it he took a small phial containing a brownish liquid and a hypodermic needle. Wetting a small piece of cotton in this liquid, he applied it gently to the eyes, nostrils, and mouth of the corpse, and injected subcutaneously a small quantity at a half-dozen or more places about the body. Then he closed the lid of the trunk and hastily corded it up. But before proceeding very far with the cording, he carefully unfastened the catch on the door. He need no longer fear interruption, and he breathed a sigh of relief that no one had tried the door while it was locked.

The train was already approaching the suburbs of Ironville, Dr. Grant's home city, when he had finished his work in the baggage car. He hastened back to the smoker to get his hand luggage ready before they should reach his destination. And, a few minutes later, he was standing on the platform watching the porters as they removed his trunk from the baggage car, making facetious remarks about its weight as they did so.

Had it not been for the contents of the trunk the physician would have taken a taxi to his home, leaving the trunk to follow. But he dreaded the possible delay in that case. If his experiment was to be a success there was no time to be lost. Consequently he found an expressman, and, riding on the seat with the driver, kept the trunk in sight all the way home.

To awake along somewhere in the late thirties or early forties to the fact that one is a failure in life, is by no means an unusual experience. What is unusual is found in the way the individual reacts to that awakening. Most men simply accept the bitter fact and plod along in their accustomed ruts, hopeless; although not usually without casting occasional envious glances in the direction of their contemporaries who have already achieved success, or those who are well on the road to its achievement. Some men there are whom this revelation merely causes to redouble their energies in the pursuit of their chosen professions, resolved that, however belated, their success shall be none the less brilliant. Then there are those—often unwise—souls who cast themselves adrift from their old moorings resolving to begin life anew, who seek entirely different surroundings, a different line of work, and a new set of friends. Of this type are many of the men who, on the threshold of middle age, with their families grown, or growing up, suddenly disappear from their homes and friends, in many cases never to be seen or heard of again; or, in a few rare instances, to appear again after an absence of ten, fifteen, or twenty years to lay a fortune at the feet of their loved ones.

Of the latter type was John Ransome, although his method was not typical of his class. John Ransome did not run quite true to form.

When he realized that in reaching his maximum of usefulness to the New York firm with which he held an upper clerkship he had also reached the maximum of his earning power in that capacity his first conscious impulse that followed a number of dark days and sleepless nights was to disappear quietly and completely. But somewhere in John Ransome's makeup there was a streak of caution. He was not the man to plunge headlong into anything new. First, he resolved, he must carefully study over the situation, then plan each consecutive move. Through a friend he learned the name of an employment agent in Cleveland. He wrote this agent and, after much correspondence, at last succeeded in landing a position there.

"New York doesn't seem to agree with me any more," John Ransome said to his wife the evening after receiving the promise of the Cleveland job. "I don't feel myself at all—haven't for months. Fellow I met down town told me he believed I needed the Middle Western climate. So I sat down and wrote an employment agency in Cleveland." He showed her the letter offering him a position.

Although because of the possible unfavorable psychological effect she had refrained from mentioning it Mrs. Ransome had for some time observed her husband's failing health; consequently she was not sorry to learn of this new resolution, even though it would entail the breaking up of many long standing friendships, to say nothing of more ephemeral social connections.

A week later John Ransome left New York City with the understanding that as soon as he was settled in his new position he would find a suitable home, then send for his wife and children. When he arrived in Cleveland he registered at a good medium priced hotel. Several days were spent in looking over the city; it was his first trip west of the Hudson, and there were many things to see. On the evening of his arrival there he wrote his wife. It was his first letter since leaving New York—as well as his last. The letter teemed with expressions of affection for herself and the children, and the wish that he might see them again. All absolutely genuine and true; so much so that throughout his stay in Cleveland Ransome was continually fighting with an almost overwhelming impulse to abandon his project and either go back home or go to work and send for his family.

Finally there came a morning when John Ransome was missing from his room at the hotel. His suitcases were still there, and they, together with the hotel dresser, contained all the possessions, clothing and personal belongings, that Ransome had taken with him with the exception of an old, well-worn blue serge suit, a pair of canvas shoes, and a gray tweed cap. Mrs. Ransome later identified the suit cases and their contents, and made note of the missing articles, upon which descriptions of the missing man were broadcast over the country.

WHEN the Eastbound freight drove its way through the middle of the string of empties at Blair's Crossing the first report that went out to the world was that there had been no casualties. True, no member of either train crew was killed, or even seriously injured, but when an hour or so later the wrecking crew reached the scene, the first thing they did was to uncover the bodies of four men under a heap of wreckage. The car in which these men had been riding was evidently directly in the locomotive's path, the horrible mangling of three of them told as much, but the fourth was almost uninjured. It seemed that he had been rendered unconscious by a blow above the car, then smothered by the bodies of the other three, which were heaped about his head.

"Hoboes," was the infallible inference.

"What shall we do with them?—nobody ever wants hoboes," demanded one of the crew.

"Couldn't possibly identify these fellows, anyway," said the foreman, indi-

cating the three. "Unless it might be by their clothes."

"This one's all right, though," indicating the fourth.

"Yes—but we might as well let 'em all go together," was the nonchalant reply. "Take some of their clothes for identification. Just a matter of form—nobody'll trouble to look at 'em."

So it happened that when the local accommodation train passed a short time later four rough boxes, each containing the remains of one of the men, were put aboard, accompanied by a bundle of such of their clothing as the boss of the wrecking crew deemed possible of identification.

Next day they were buried in Ironville. So far no one had attempted to identify them, or even seemed at all interested in the dead hoboes. But the clothes were preserved, and many days later Mrs. Ransome, overwhelmed with anxiety at the disappearance of her husband, came to learn that one of the hoboes who lost his life at Blair's Crossing was wearing a blue serge coat and a gray tweed cap. By dint of much persistent correspondence with the proper authorities she at last succeeded in getting these meager relics forwarded to New York. There she identified them as positively as might be under the circumstances; the names of makers and merchants bearing out the identification in every particular.

"Can I give you a hand with that trunk, doctor?" demanded a dark-bearded man, who stood at the curb watching Dr. Grant and the truckman as they unloaded the heavy trunk at the sidewalk in front of the physician's home.

"Very kind of you, Mr. Forsythe," replied the doctor. "One end of it is a pretty big load for an old man like me. If you'll just take hold here, I guess this expressman's husky enough to carry his end."

Then as his neighbor attempted to take the whole weight of one end of the trunk on himself, "Hold on there, man—I know you're strong as an ox, but that's no reason why you should try to show me how weak and decrepit I am."

"Any calls?" demanded the doctor of his housekeeper, as he turned to watch his neighbor returning to the less strenuous occupation of watering his lawn. "Too much blood-pressure for that kind of exertion. His face is purple now, what little of it shows around the edges of his whiskers."

"Nothing important, doctor," replied the woman, following the physician to the laboratory door, just within which they had deposited the trunk. "I wasn't expecting you back yet—told everybody you wouldn't be back before tomorrow. Oh, yes, Mr. Mills wanted you to call up and make an appointment to see him about that Perkins case just as soon as you got in."

"All right, we'll let Mills think I got home tomorrow."

"And Mr. Forsythe had a bad attack a day or two ago. They came for you, then called Dr. Ellsworth."

"What was it?—about as usual?" demanded the physician keenly.

The housekeeper nodded. "I suppose so," she replied. "He was up and about next day. Seemed to feel as well as ever."

"Strange man," commented Dr. Grant, shaking his head. "Simply will not take care of himself. Of course he says he has no great interest in his body. Told me the last time I saw him professionally that he'd be glad to be rid of it. Still I noticed just now that he was proud as a boy to show off his great physical strength. I'm almost as keen on metaphysics as he is, but I haven't completely given up the physical yet."

The woman shrugged. "Mr. Forsythe is a deep student," said she with a judicial air which it seemed was meant to convey the impression that she herself was not wholly ignorant of such matters. "But here I am talking when I ought to be in the kitchen. I wasn't expecting you, doctor—dinner will be a little late, I'm afraid."

"Never mind that," replied Dr. Grant hastily, "I was called in consultation on a very serious case down at Red Falls and will have to do some laboratory work tonight. Just make up a few sandwiches and a pot of coffee. I'll take them into the laboratory and get right to work."

By the time the physician had settled with the expressman and run upstairs to wash and change into a light alpaca coat, the housekeeper was on hand with the sandwiches and coffee. Dr. Grant swept aside a rack of test-tubes, a spirit-lamp, two or three retorts containing strange-looking mixtures, and a skull, to make place for his food; then, telling the woman that he was on no account to be disturbed that night, locked the door behind her, and after eating a sandwich and drinking a cup of coffee, uncorded the trunk.

No alteration was apparent in the appearance of the corpse. No indication of rigor mortis was yet discernible, which fact seemed to give satisfaction to Dr. Grant, although he admitted to himself that it might not have set in yet in spite of the treatment he had given the corpse en route.

A long table stood under the chandelier in the center of the room. This Dr. Grant cleared of the mass of chemical apparatus under which it groaned, and placed the limp body upon it. First, he again applied the liquid that he used on the train, touching it to eyes, nostrils and mouth—then subcutaneously. Next he took up a large notebook in which he had kept a record of experimentation upon cavies and other small animals, and for half an hour or more diligently studied these records.

For hours the physician labored; at first psychically, then physically, as the phases of his experiment passed from the higher to the lower human functions. After the first few hours he came almost to despair of attracting the higher elements of the man into close relations with the body, but at last, at a little past one o'clock, his efforts were rewarded. A pulmotor went far toward completing his task when there remained only the reawakening of the physical functioning of the body. Dawn was already breaking when the man began to breathe ever so faintly.

Gradually the physical body began to function in response to external stimuli, but all day the spark of life was very faint, very uncertain. At noon Dr. Grant came out of his laboratory, locking the door securely behind him, and warning his housekeeper against any sudden noise or heavy jar, saying that the vibrations set up in such case might work disaster upon the delicate experiment which was in process of consummation within.

"Any news?" he demanded of the housekeeper when he came to the end of the list of instructions.

"Mr. Forsythe died suddenly in the night," she replied. "It was about one o'clock this morning. I happened to hear them calling for Dr. Ellsworth. Apoplexy, it seems."

"Forsythe!" exclaimed the doctor, "William Forsythe! At one o'clock! Good Heavens!" Then after a moment, "I don't know why I should feel surprised at the news; I've been looking for it for years. He was a perfect subject for apoplexy. No details, of course?"

The woman shook her head doubtfully. Dr. Grant was an anomaly to his housekeeper—an unfathomable mixture of the spiritual and the material. Most of the good old universally accepted superstitions which had come to be an integral part of her being were ridiculed by the

physician as the rankest of self-delusion, while he accepted and made use of practices that to her made ancient witchcraft a colorless business, mild and insipid. Consequently she was never sure where she would come upon her employer's line of demarcation. The deceased Mr. Forsythe had been a metaphysician of sorts, a student of the occult of no mean attainments.

"You remember the nail-marks?" she asked diffidently.

"The prints in his hands that developed when he was studying Christian mysticism so deeply?"

The housekeeper nodded. "You know how he concentrated for a clearer conception of the crucifixion—and, as a result, the nail-prints appeared?"

"Yes," replied the physician, "I have seen them. They were a reality."

"Mr. Thomas, the grocery solicitor, told me that the prints had disappeared since his death—absolutely disappeared."

"Eh?" ejaculated Dr. Grant, starting suddenly, and shooting the woman a lightning glance from under his ragged brows, "The nail-prints disappeared? Is he sure of that?"

"Mr. Thomas said he had it from Dr. Ellsworth himself."

"Well, Ellsworth has no business starting a lot of gossip about it anyway."

IN THE evening the patient sat up while the doctor stitched up the superficial scalp-wound above his ear. Physical strength was coming rapidly; although so far there seemed to be no mental clarity at all. He seemed to understand, in a dazed way, the simple instructions from Dr. Grant; he sat up when told, and drank the mildly stimulating beverages which constituted his diet. Later in the evening the physician dragged an old army cot downstairs under the pretext of seeking an opportunity to snatch a few minutes' rest in the laboratory before he would be able to leave off work for the night and go upstairs to bed. This, of course, was more comfortable than the hard table upon which the patient had been lying, and he was soon in a profound sleep, breathing regularly and deeply. On account of the wearing vigil of the previous night the doctor left his patient early, well pleased with his condition and expecting to find him much improved by morning.

As the days passed the man visibly improved. His frame, which had been rather gaunt, filled out amazingly, and he became decidedly more youthful in appearance. His brain, though, never seemed to get clear. Nothing that he could recall, nothing that the doctor could suggest, sufficed to shed the slightest light on his identity. In fact any allusion to the subject only confused him more. He would spend hours looking in the mirror, a puzzled expression on his face, or sit vacantly stroking his cheeks and skin, as one might who wore a full beard. At such times his mental discord apparently reached its height.

From the third day Dr. Grant had not attempted to conceal the fact of his patient's presence in the house. He introduced him as a patient who was suffering from loss of memory, perhaps a trifle melancholy—and told his housekeeper that he wished to have the man where he could be under constant observation.

As the days went by the physician tried everything in his power to restore the man's latent mental functions. In most respects he was normal. There was no reason for this peculiar psychic condition. The most rigid scientific tests failed to reveal any physical deficiency in the man's brain. It was Dr. Grant's object to exhibit him to the world as the dead man whom he had restored to life. For a number of years the doctor had been experimenting on lower animals, and writing articles for the medical journals in support of his peculiar theories. In most cases they had been received with incredulity—often with ill-disguised ridicule. Here now was the undeniable proof of his theory, the justification of his life's work—yet he dared not exhibit this muddled intelligence as an example. A man who nearest approached the normal when sitting, his hands in his lap before him, staring wide-eyed at the open palms, was not the sort of proof he wanted.

Then came a night when the man disappeared, and with him passed Dr. Morton Grant's opportunity for fame as the man who had restored the dead to life. But the physician's sensation was not wholly one of disappointment upon discovering his loss.

ABOUT two years later Mrs. John Ransome was hurrying home to her children one afternoon. With the identification of the garments found upon the man killed at Blair's Crossing she had given up all hope of ever again seeing her husband. She had taken her eldest son out of school at once, and since that time the two of them had managed to support themselves and the younger children. Life was hard, certainly, but not more so than in the cases of thousands of other women who are left each year with growing families and no means of caring for them. As she passed Eighth Avenue walking west on Twenty-third Street, she saw a familiar-looking figure in the garb of a street-worker. At first she received no more striking impression than just of familiarity. She hesitated—turned into Eighth Avenue and approached the man, eagerly scrutinizing his face and figure as she did so.

"John!" she cried, as, standing on the curb, she faced her long absent husband, who eyed her dully in half-dazed wonder. "John, why, where have you been all these years?—why didn't you come home?"

There was no reply. Only the strange, puzzled stare.

"Why don't you speak? Oh, what is it, John—what is the matter?" And half-crying, she ran forward and seized his hand. "What makes you stare so? Why do you look so strange? Don't you know me?—your wife?—Anne?"

"Wife!" he whispered thickly—"wife!" And he shook his head, "No, I don't know."

Her eager eyes fell upon the ugly jagged scar above his ear.

"Ah," she exclaimed, understandingly, "my poor boy! Your head has been terribly injured. And loss of memory has resulted from that injury."

For a moment she stood silent, thinking rapidly. "They said it was a hobo," she mused. Then to him: "Did some one attack you and take your clothes from you?"

No reply.

"Did some one—?" Then pointing to the scar on his head. "Was this bad, very bad?—was it just done when you can first remember?"

The man hesitated a moment, still puzzled—then nodded, "Yes."

"And the man who stole your clothes was the man that was killed.

"Oh, John, isn't it fine to have you home again? And we'll nurse you up and make you just as well and strong as you used to be."

Reluctantly, it seemed—dazedly the man followed as she led him to the pavement, and in the direction of the little apartment she called home. The memory that he searched in the attempt to place this woman was a dwelling place of shadows, and among those shadows there was none that resembled her.

"And look!" she cried, examining more closely the hand which she had

continued to hold as though she would never again let it go, "see what they have done to this hand! There are great scars as though nails had been driven through the palm, and"—as she held up the other, more for his own than her inspection—"the other is just like it! My poor boy! What you must have suffered!"

The keen feminine intuition of the woman sensed the quieting of the man's perturbed brain, sensed the soothing, calming influence that swept over him as he studied his scarred palms.

"My hands," he breathed contentedly.

"Yes, your hands, John," she murmured happily, pressing his arm, "John!"

"John?" the man queried, still studying his palms, "John?"

"You don't—" began the woman awkwardly, "you haven't forgotten your own name, have you? John—John Ransome. Don't you remember?"

"John," he repeated slowly, "John Ransome. It seems easy to say, but I don't remember. I—I don't think I ever heard it before. You say it used to be my name?"

His wife nodded, swallowing hard to keep back the tears, "Not only, 'used to be,' John; it is now. It's your name now!"

The man looked at her a moment, then with the intense singleness of purpose of the dying man who clutches grimly at whatever yet remains to him of this life, looked back at his scarred hands. He made no reply.

"Surely you haven't been without a name. You've been working here, haven't you? You must have given some name?"

The man nodded. "Yes," he said, "I did give a name when I got this job. I—I knew I wasn't like other people. I seemed to have no past at all. Everything was so dark, so hazy and uncertain behind me. I—I didn't want to tell them I had no name; so when they asked me I just gave the first name that came into my mind."

"And what was that, John?"

"William Forsythe."

Pardon for Forgery

AT the York Assizes in 1803, the clerk to a mercantile house in Leeds was tried on a charge of forgery, found guilty, and condemned to death. His family in Halifax was very respectable, and his father, in particular, bore an excellent character. Immediately after the sentence was passed upon the unfortunate young man, a dissenting minister of the Baptist persuasion, who had long been intimate with the father, presumed to address his Majesty in a most moving petition, soliciting the pardon of the son of his friend. Fully aware that it had been almost an invariable rule with the government to grant no pardons in cases of forgery, he had little hopes of success; but, contrary to his expectations his petition prevailed, and the reprieve was granted. That the solicitation of a private individual should have succeeded, when similar applications, urged by numbers, and supported by great interest, have uniformly failed, may excite surprise and deserves particular observation. The following circumstances, the veracity of which may be depended upon, fully explain the singularity of the fact. In the year 1802, a dignified divine preaching before the royal family, happened to quote a passage illustrative of his subject from a living author, whose name he would not mention. The king, who was always remarkably attentive, was struck with the quotation and immediately noted the passage for an enquiry. At the conclusion of the service, he asked the preacher from whom that extract had been taken, and being informed that the author was a dissenting minister in Yorkshire, he expressed a wish to have a copy of the original discourse. The royal mandate was accordingly imparted to the author, who lost no time in complying with it, accompanying the work with a very modest letter, expressive of the high sense he entertained of the honor conferred upon him. His Majesty was so well pleased with the production, as to signify his readiness to serve the author. The case of the above young man soon afforded this amiable and disinterested minister an opportunity of supplicating at the hands of the monarch, the exercise of his prerogative of mercy, in favor of the son of his friend, as the greatest favor his Majesty could confer.

Terrific Death of a Painter

PETER PEUTEMANN was a good painter of still-life; but a most memorable circumstance relating to this artist was the incident which occasioned his death. He was employed to paint a picture of an emblematical representation of mortality, expressive of the pleasures of this world, and of the shortness and misery of human life; and that he might imitate some parts of his subject with greater accuracy, he painted them in an anatomical room, where several skulls and bones lay scattered in profusion about the floor. Here he prepared to take his designs; and, either from previous fatigue, or the intenseness of his study, he fell asleep. This was on September 18, 1692, when an earthquake, which happened while he was dozing, roused him, and the instant he awoke he perceived the skulls rolling about the room, and the skeletons in motion. Being totally ignorant of the cause, he was struck with such horror, that he immediately threw himself down stairs in the wildest desperation. His friends took all possible pains to efface the dreadful impression from his mind, explaining the true cause of the agitation of the skeletons; nevertheless, his spirits received so violent a shock, that he never recovered his health, but expired soon after, aged forty-two.

TEA LEAVES

By HENRY S. WHITEHEAD

THE Spanish War had not yet broken in upon the late nineties when the great day came for Miss Abby Tucker—the day on which she deposited the last fifteen dollars which completed her Europe Fund. Five hundred dollars. At last the end of that desperate scrimping! Here was the price completed of a Cook's Tour, and an extra hundred for presents, every expenditure planned and polished to a hard brilliancy in the imagination-mill of a frugal little New England school-teacher.

Few people had heard of "nervous reactions" in 1897, but Miss Abby had one as she stepped out of the bank. Perhaps a too-steady diet of bread and tea had something to do with it. But for all her meager little body, Miss Abby possessed a soul above nervous reactions. She stopped, and drew several deep breaths when her heart began to flutter and race, but she soon dispelled the effects of her "turn" by the recollection that it was now only the beginning of the Easter Vacation. She had three whole months left in which to arrange the last, fascinating detail of her tour!

There was, for example, the Tower of London. There was also Stratford-on-Avon. There was Vesuvius, and the Temples at Paestum. Miss Abby did hope they might go to Paestum. That was culture! She had steeped her soul in culture, at second-hand, chiefly through the works of Miss Constance Fenimore Woolson, of which Sophia Granniss approved strongly. Miss Granniss, who taught English Literature at the High School, insisted, too, on the necessity of a sojurn on or near the Grand Canal, the study of the Doge's Palace, and at least slight cultural familiarity—as she called it—with the great Church of Santa Maria della Salute. There were, too, the pigeons on the Piazza. That Piazza! Miss Abby's thoughts carried her happily to all these, and to other, anticipated delights. There was the Campanile, and the Four Bronze Horses of San Marco. Napoleon, she knew, had either brought them there or carried them away! She never could remember which. She must look that up. Anyhow, they were there now to be gazed at. Sophia Granniss said that the glimpse one had of Monte Rosa over in Italy, as one traversed the Gemmi Pass from Spiess to Kandersteg, was "sublime," and urged Miss Abby not to miss that whatever else she might do. "You simply must take that walk, Miss Tucker," she had remarked. "If you don't, you'll live to regret it. Now mark my words!"

The nervous reaction had gone about its business. Miss Abby picked her careful way along the muddy street to her boarding-house. It would not be necessary to crimp quite so closely during the last school term before vacation in June. Miss Abby gained a pound and a quarter during that term.

It was a happy period for her, what with its constant references to the guide-books she got in turn from the public library of the little Vermont town, the minute arrangements for her departure, and especially, the high lights of certain necessary purchases. These included a steamer-rug, a shawl-strap with a leather handle, which Sophia Grannis had insisted upon, and a new valise. Then there was finally the almost suffocating experience of drawing the four hundred dollars for Thomas Cook and Sons and sending it off in four postal money orders at one fell swoop.

The next day after the closing of school she went to Boston to interview the agent of the steamship line about her accommodations. Sophia Granniss had insisted that "the personal touch" in all such matters was absolutely necessary, and Miss Abby, feeling—a little goaded, went. She did not succeed in interviewing the steamship agent himself, although she inquired for him. She did see a very polite young English clerk, however. He was very polite indeed.

"I've come to see about my accommodations on board the *Ruritania* sailing the twenty-third, from Hoboken, New Jersey," began Miss Abby. The clerk smiled delightfully, Miss Abby thought.

"I'm sorry. There are no accommodations on board the *Ruritania*. That is a 'one-class' ship, you know, and Cook and Sons have booked her all up."

"Yes, thank you, I know that. You see, I'm going with that—ah—group. I only wish to make the arrangements about my cabin."

The clerk disclaimed responsibility.

"That, you see, is all arranged between the agency and the—that, ah—tou—their clients, you know. I mean to say we only make over the entire ship to them and they make the individual arrangements."

Miss Abby was distinctly disappointed. The "personal touch" then, would involve going on to New York and interviewing Messrs. Cook and Sons. That was out of the question, impossible—financially impossible. She ruminated, a gloved finger against her lips.

"But I'm quite certain to have a cabin to myself, am I not?" she asked anxiously.

"Well, you see—I mean to say—that—ah—depends! Might I venture to inquire—ah—how much—hm! I—ah—mean to say—"

Miss Abby relieved the embarrassment of the young Englishman.

"I am paying four hundred dollars," she informed him.

"I fear—I really am afraid—that you wouldn't have the sole use of a cabin. These tours are very popular, you know, and there will be a good many people going. Probably they will pack you in, rather."

Miss Abby thanked him, and took advantage of being in Boston to visit her married sister in Medford. She returned two days later, regretting the certainty that at the price she had paid she could not have the privacy of even the tiniest cabin, but resolved that, come what might, the strong-minded Miss Granniss should keep her finger out of the pie from then on! It was to be *her* tour; not Sophia Granniss' Sophia Granniss had had hers!

At last the day of departure dawned. Several friends came to the station to see her off, proffering advice to the very last. The traveler for foreign parts sighed with relief as the train chug-chugged its deliberate way out of the railroad station with stentorian whoopings from the engine-whistle. She settled herself luxuriously to the perusal of a newly-bought magazine, but the perusal was sketchy for her heart was singing within her exultantly.

IN A KIND of happy daze she braved the unaccustomed terrors of crossing New York City, of threading the mazes of an uncharted Hoboken, of finding the right pier, and finally, of making herself known to the tour conductor. If anybody had taken especial notice of Miss Abby—which nobody did—while the liner was slipping down the bay with her nose to the open sea, such person would have caught a glimpse of a perfect, whole-souled happiness.

She was, indeed, far too happy to be seasick! She ate every meal with a sound appetite, and she liked everything but the coffee. That was, to her boarding-house nurtured palate, altogether too powerful a drink, and she soon reverted to her more accustomed tea.

Her attention to the tea leaves diverted her fellow travelers greatly. By long practice she had become accustomed to mixing the tea about with her spoon so that the tea leaves would accumulate on the bottom of the cup, and then, deftly, she would drink the remaining tea and set the cup down with a kind of snap and peer at the picture on the bottom. She had acquired great skill in discerning the meanings in these omens! Now for the first time in her life, however, the patterns puzzled her. The word "bow" kept turning up with monotonous frequency. Sometimes it would be an arrangement of the tea-leaves like a tied ribbon; sometimes the very letters themselves made their appearance. One day she blushed to herself over the implication which she found. A queer little homunculus near the side of the cup bowed grotesquely to the figure of a seated figure at the bottom, and "beau" was inevitable! Miss Abby hastily disarranged this embarrassing scene with her teaspoon lest any prying, neighborly eye should see it too and, perhaps, think her somehow unmaidenly!

Then, too, the numbers four and seven would get themselves mixed in with the "bow" pictures. Miss Abby went the length of publicly interpreting this to mean, under pressure of onlookers, that when *her* beau appeared he would be forty-seven years of age. "Or," said she archly, "perhaps it means that I shall be forty-seven when he makes his appearance!" and she smiled at her fancy to the verge of blushing.

She enjoyed every minute of that propitious voyage.

At Gibraltar, she secured, after considerable bargaining with an opal-eyed nondescript, a lace mantilla for her cousin Emmaline in Bellow's Falls, and this at a price thirty-five cents less than she had planned on for Emmaline's present.

This securing of presents for relatives and friends was part of a long-made plan. From Salviati's in Venice she added largely to her store in the matter of mosaic brooches. In Bavaria she loaded up her luggage with somewhat bulkier gifts for the juvenile nieces and nephews in the shape of wooden toy-animals.

Nearly every place contributed its quota to this impedimenta, until as the tour neared its end the list at last became complete. Every single present was bought. Everybody had been remembered. The list was checked.

It was not, indeed, until that tour drew to a triumphant close with what has sometimes been described as "Seeing England in Five Days," that it occurred to Miss Abby that in her concern for the others she had quite forgotten to expend the two dollars and a half which she had mentally set aside for the purchase of something for herself.

It was three days before the date set for sailing for home when this fact popped into her head. They were in London. The Tower had been viewed *en masse*. So had St. Paul's Cathedral, The Houses of Parliament, and Westminster Abbey, Poet's Corner and all! Hampton Court had got a glance. So had several other places of interest, which had passed under the breathless purview of those personally conducted. The next day they were to journey to Limehouse and London Docks. Miss Abby thought of her souvenir at luncheon. They had come back to their hotel direct from Trafalgar Square, the party joker, who had urged the conductor to show them Sherlock Holmes' house in Baker Street, having failed dismally! She decided that she would skip the regular program for the afternoon, and go shopping instead. It was the first item she had missed, that afternoon's fly-about.

At dinner, later, she seemed preoccupied. Bewildered among the riches of London town after a long shopping trip upon which she had looked at many things and had bought nothing, she had at last realized that she was "as good as lost," and had enquired of a policeman the shortest route back to the hotel. He directed her, and the route led through a narrow, dingy street, little more than an alley, connecting two great thoroughfares. She had been much nearer the hotel than she had imagined. She had traversed this short-cut about halfway when she came before a small shop on the corner formed by the intersection of another alleyway. In the shop-window was displayed a miscellaneous collection of merchandise. There were ladies' watches, paper-cutters, bangles of many kinds, old rings, silver and wooden bookmarkers, pocketbooks, various set and unset semi-precious stones of dubious appearance, umbrellas, a lone lorgnette which appeared second-hand, and a bead necklace. This last caught Miss Abby's eye and she stopped to look at it. It was of medium-sized, pinkish beads. It was dusty and badly soiled, but it had a tiny gilt clasp which seemed to Miss Abby to set it off very well, and the beads themselves were well proportioned and nicely graded.

Miss Abby had always—all her life—wanted a pink bead necklace. Here was one, modest, commending itself therefore to the taste of a self respecting spinster a little past the first bloom of youth. This, too, it was probable, would be inexpensive, and that was a strong recommendation for it!

MISS ABBY, always a cautious soul, took rapid stock of the small shop, and decided that it appeared respectable. In this process she glanced at the doorway, which bore the number forty-seven. She smiled, remembering the omen of the tea-leaves. Across the alleyway her swiftly roving eye caught a street sign. It was dingy and the lettering was almost obliterated, but seeing it, Miss Abby came very near to having one of her "turns." For the faded letters spelled BOW LANE!

She gasped for breath, pressed her hand against her fluttering heart, and entered the shop almost grimly. The proprietor, wiping the crumbs of a tea-cake from his narrow face, and aroused by the tinkle of the little bell which the opening of the door sounded in his back room, emerged from that mysterious recess.

"I'd like to look at that necklace, please," said Miss Abby, pointing to it where it hung in the shop-window.

The shopkeeper detached the necklace from where it hung on a wire, blew upon it to free it from the surface dust, and placed it on the counter. Miss Abby picked it up and looked at it closely. Save that it badly needed a good scouring it was precisely what she wanted.

"How much is it, please?" she enquired.

"Well now, nobody's asked to see that-there necklace," remarked the proprietor, as he poked at it with a soiled forefinger, "since I bought this-'ere shop with its stock and fixtures, nineteen year now come Michaelmas. It was one bit

of the old stock at that, Miss. I'll let you 'ave it for—well—say sixteen bob. 'Ow's that, Miss?"

Miss Abby did some mental arithmetic. Sixteen shillings! That would be about four dollars—three eighty-four. That was rather more than she had planned to spend on herself. Then she remembered that this was Old England and not New England! Here one was expected to "bargain."

"I'll give you eight shillings," she said, crisply. . . .

They came to an agreement on the sum of twelve shillings, but Miss Abby could not quite bring herself to the point of closing the bargain and walking off with the necklace. She examined it again, the shopkeeper waiting in silence. It was fifty cents, or thereabouts, more than she had planned. Still! . . .

She bought it at last, counting out the money carefully lest she make a mistake, and walked out with it wrapped up, in her pocket, in whitey-brown paper.

She went straight to the hotel and took the necklace to her room. There she prepared some warm suds and soaked it. She had to change the water more than once. At last it was clean. She rinsed and dried it thoroughly. It looked much better now. There was a kind of shine to the beads which was very attractive. Then she polished the tiny gilt clasp as well as she could. She laid it away after wrapping it up, when she had it as clean as she could make it, and descended for dinner on the dot. Three days later she was *en route* for home.

She took out her necklace several times aboard ship and looked at it. On the last evening aboard, the evening of The Concert, she wore it. No one noticed it, but that did not trouble Miss Abby. She had chosen it chiefly because it was plain and inconspicuous. She declared it with the rest of her purchases at the value of two dollars and eighty-eight cents. The inspector glanced at her and then took one perfunctory glance at the contents of her grip, now covered with "etiquettes" and pasted his little paster on the end, and she was "through."

She was well settled into her accustomed routine by Christmas. Her tour had supplied her with culture enough and memories enough to last her for the lifetime of more or less sordid drudgery which was the best she could possibly anticipate for the future. But Miss Abby wasted no time over gloomy anticipations. She accepted all of the few joyful things that came in her way and she sang a little tune as she dressed for the Christmas party in her boarding-house. She put on the necklace last of all, and glanced at it with approval in the glass as it hung gracefully about her slim but by no means unbeautiful neck. Then, almost running, she went through the hallway and downstairs.

It was the usual country party. There were games, and a great deal of high-pitched conversation, and later, a substantial supper. It was long before the supper though that Miss Abby discovered the presence of a young man, a stranger to her, who seemed to glance at her in a certain way. She decided that the proper descriptive adjective was "respectful." He looked at her respectfully, with interest. She was strong-minded and she knew that she was thirty-seven, but when she caught him looking at her for the fourth time, she could feel her heart speed up again slightly, and she said "Oh!" almost out loud!

For this was a very nice-looking young man, this stranger. He was, she considered, about her own age, perhaps a trifle more mature. He was still young, though! He was dressed quietly, in good taste, and his patent leather shoes gave him, Miss Abby considered, quite an urban touch. There was a suggestion of the man-of-the-world about those shoes—a look of sophistication. Miss Abby found herself cataloguing him. He looked like someone in a bank. He looked as though he might be, on Sunday, a Superintendent of a rather modern kind of Sunday School. That kind of a young man.

Miss Abby's heart gave an unmistakable flutter later when she observed the young man, in polite conversation with their hostess, and approaching her where she sat on a sofa, under the guardianship of a tall India-rubber plant.

"Let me make you acquainted with Miss Tucker," said the landlady, on her arrival, "Miss Tucker, Mr. Leverett, of Bellow's Falls."

Mr. Leverett of Bellow's Falls bowed—a very nice bow, Miss Abby thought to herself. She murmured something appropriate to the introduction and Mr. Leverett sat down beside her on the sofa and began to talk pleasantly.

THEY put each other at ease immediately, without any conscious effort on the part of either. Almost at once the talk fell into a confidential tone, as though each had many things to say to the other—sometime! Miss Abby could not help telling herself that Mr. Leverett's still entirely respectful gaze had something else behind it—something much more personal than the weather and the party, which topics had been so far exclusively discussed between them! There was a curious feeling, an indescribable kind of atmosphere, or glow, about those first few minutes of conversation, the kind of glow of which Romance is sometimes happily woven.

When Mr. Leverett switched from the weather and the party and very respectfully enquired if he might ask "a personal question," Miss Abby, while far from surprised, felt her heart give one of those little jumps which by now she had learned to associate with an "experience." She reassured herself with the consideration that there could hardly be any "personal question" of any grave import which could well be asked after five minutes' conversation on first acquaintance!

"Why, certainly," she replied, very brightly, and looked up at him almost quizzically.

Mr. Leverett—he really was, said Miss Abby to herself afterwards, a very nice young man—blushed, positively blushed.

"I thought, perhaps, you wouldn't mind my asking where you got that necklace you are wearing," said Mr. Leverett, without more than two stammers. "You see, I'm in the jewelry business over at Bellow's Falls, and I'm very much interested in anything like that. It's rather odd, that necklace."

Miss Abby, such is the human heart, was at once relieved and vaguely disappointed.

"It's only a little thing I bought last Summer in London," she replied, taking it off and laying it, warm from her pretty throat, in Mr. Leverett's hand. "It's pretty, I think," she continued as he looked closely at the necklace, "but it was very inexpensive. It's only a trifle."

"Hm!" remarked Mr. Leverett, still looking closely at the necklace, "do you happen to know what the beads are made of?"

"Why, really,I don't think I ever noticed exactly. But I've always supposed they were a kind of good imitation of coral, or perhaps of carnelian. I've thought several times I got a pretty good bargain, don't you?"

"I think they are something else. The beads are of a different texture from either coral or carnelian. I'd certainly like to look at them under a magnifying-glass. Would you, er—mind—ah—telling me. . . O please forgive me! You see I'm a jeweler, and I'm so much interested! I was actually going to ask you how much . . ."

Again Mr. Leverett blushed.

"That's all right," reassured Miss Abby, in an even tone. It's a perfectly proper question, I'm sure. I paid twelve shillings for them, about two dollars and eight-eight cents."

Mr. Leverett peered at the necklace closely, with a kind of professional squint as though he were looking at the works of a watch.

"If it were not too preposterous," he said, slowly, "I'd say they were something like pearls, a very finely-made imitation of pearls, and colored, of course, artificially, with that peculiar shade of pink which you naturally associated with coral or carnelian. Yes—very well made, indeed. You certainly got a tremendous bargain."

"How much should you say they might be worth?" It was Miss Abby who blushed this time.

Mr. Leverett cogitated this question, rolling the extended string of beads over and over in his hands.

"It's very hard to put a price on anything like these," he remarked at last, judicially, "as you can easily see. They are very fine workmanship, almost 'ancient,' I should say. Beautiful work—beautiful! It is real jeweler's handwork of the best quality. The clasp, and the metal string, and the exact piercing all show fine work. To get a set like these, made today, you would certainly have to pay—um—let me see! Well, I should be inclined to think, about five hundred dollars." Then, as she exclaimed, "I'll tell you what to do, Miss Tucker. Why not take them to Boston and have them properly valued? You could take them into one of the great jewelry stores like Muffen's, where they would be in a position to give you a proper estimate; to look at them with good glasses and all that. You see, these might be worth even more than five hundred dollars. I only made a very rough guess."

Miss Abby could hardly compose herself to sleep that night. Just suppose! Five hundred dollars! The complete expenses of her trip! It wouldn't be right; it would not be fair to the man in the little shop there in Bow Lane, London! Miss Abby had a New England conscience—an old-fashioned one, in good working-order! Still, she was no fool. If they were of some considerable value, it was just the man's sheer carelessness that had not found it out. He had confessed to having the beads for nineteen years!

It occurred to her that she had several days before school started up again, and a little money in hand. She was not saving nowadays for a Europe Fund! It doesn't cost such a terrible lot of money to get to Boston, and she could stay with her sister in Medford. She made up her mind to go, abruptly, and with this anticipated adventure clasped close, she fell quickly asleep.

The next afternoon Miss Abby was asking for an interview with a member of the firm at Muffen's jewelry store in Boston. She was received by a gentleman named Mr. Hay. He listened gravely to her story, took the necklace, and requested her to return the next morning at eleven.

She was promptly on hand and found Mr. Hay wearing an expression of restrained enthusiasm. He was very cordial, and received her as though he had known her for some time! Miss Abby sat, tight-lipped, awaiting the verdict.

"I have made a very careful examination of your necklace," said Mr. Hay, with some deliberation. "Two of our men in the store have also examined it at my request. We are at one in our conclusion. The necklace is of pink pearls, and these are among the most valuable of pearls when in perfect condition. A further and more exhaustive examination would have to be made, doubtless. But, as you said yesterday, you managed to get a real 'bargain.' I think I may tell you at once that we are prepared, in case you wish to dispose of the pearls, to give you our cheque for six thousand dollars."

Miss Abby uttered a little gasp. Her eyes were shining. But she was careful, even in that overwhelming moment, not to interrupt Mr. Hay, who had only paused, and seemed about to continue.

"At the same time," he added, "we feel unwilling to take any undue advantage of our comparative ignorance of the true value of the necklace. We therefore feel that we should advise you, definitely, to take this course—" Mr. Hay paused again, and continued:

"We suggest that you allow our offer to stand. We are ready to carry through that arrangement at any time. But we suggest to you that you take the necklace first to New York, to Dufane's, where Dr. Schwartz, the pearl-expert is employed. Show the pearls to him and get his valuation. We do not imagine that it will be less than ours; it may very likely be more. In that case, it will be to your advantage to sell them elsewhere."

Mr. Hay bowed Miss Abby politely out, and she emerged upon the street walking on air. She wasted no time. This was sound advice and she knew it. The next morning she bade her relatives good-bye and took the early train to New York.

Her interview with the great pearl-expert proved a very simple matter. She went straight to Dufane's, and told the first person she saw that she was bringing some pearls from Muffen's in Boston to Dr. Schwartz for valuation. She had not meant to deceive her interlocutor, but he gathered the natural impression that she was in the employ of the Boston jewelers, and she was shown in to Dr. Schwartz at once. He took the pearls and gave her an appointment for the next afternoon at two o'clock.

Leaving the great store she took, for the first time in her life, what she called "herdic," or four-wheeler cab, and was driven to the Grand Union Hotel. After dinner there, being tired, she said her prayers and retired at eight o'clock.

THE next morning dragged. She had arisen, according to her habit, bright and early, made her bed, eaten breakfast at an hour when no one else except an early-starting commercial traveler or two was in the dining-room, and was engaged in addressing picture-postal cards when the hotel chambermaid came in about ten o'clock. The maid gasped and beat hasty retreat, never before had she known a guest of the hotel to "do" her room herself!

Miss Abby, somewhat appalled at the prices in the hotel dining-room took her lunch at a small restaurant, and shortly thereafter went to keep her appointment at Dufane's.

She was agreeably surprised on entering that great store to be addressed by name. Wondering somewhat at this distinction, she followed her guide to the sanctum of the pearl-expert. Here a surprising exercise was taking place. It was a good-sized room, up three flights in the elevator, and it was filled with men; filled almost uncomfortably. There were men with beards and men without; tall, thin men, and short, fat men. She counted nineteen, though she could not be certain she had included them all, for they kept moving about in the most extraordinary way. Little groups and knots of men kept forming, breaking up, and re-forming again. Everybody seemed to be talking in every imaginable language, including the Scandinavian! But this was only the impression she got on her arrival. The talking and the group-shifting stopped abruptly at her arrival, and everybody present turned to stare at her. Miss Abby had never been so embarrassed in her life! Then Dr. Schwartz rescued her and showed her to a seat at the end of the long table which ran down the length of the big room.

The pearl-expert coughed slightly and said:

"Will you please oblige us, Miss Tucker, by telling us about this necklace; and first, if you please, how it came into your possession?"

Miss Abby told them.

When she finished her brief and matter-of-fact recital there was a moment of silence, silence that is, like the calm before the storm. Then the storm broke. A kind of roaring hum burst forth simultaneously from the throats of all the men present. Every one was talking at once; nobody listening. Miss Abby tried to listen, but it was too much for her. She was completely nonplussed for the very first time in her life. It seemed to her that some of these men whom she had never seen or heard of before were shouting at her! It was dreadful! It was like being plunged suddenly into a meeting in a madhouse. The little groups formed afresh, only more rapidly now. Men gesticulated, and shouted at the tops of their voices. Two dark-skinned gentlemen who gesticulated more than any of the others seemed at one moment to be about to begin a duel, but they ended this demonstration very queerly, Miss Abby thought, by clasping each other in their arms and kissing each other! A phlegmatic gentleman with a thick, guttural accent, was waddling up and down the whole length of the room, much like a caged polar-bear, and waving his arms like flails all the time. He was rumbling, in his deep voice, "incredible, incredible, incredible," over and over again.

Even Dr. Schwartz, to whom she looked as her anchor in this tumultuous sea—even Dr. Schwartz was waving *his* arms about, and shouting with the rest!

It occurred to the distracted Miss Abby that perhaps she was going to faint. While she was wondering, Dr. Schwartz, who had waved his arms and shouted, after all, to some purpose, succeeded in establishing something like quiet. "Gentlemen, GENTLEMEN!" he was shouting.

At last he prevailed, and in the comparative silence which ensued he addressed Miss Abby a second time:

"You will understand," he said, "my dear lady, that an event like this does not occur every day among jewelers. These gentlemen and I have all examined your wonderful necklace. We are unanimous in our opinion. There is indeed, no room for doubt. This necklace is unique. Not one of us was aware of its existence, that is for the past two centuries, since it disappeared from the British Museum, in eighteen hundred and one. There is, I may inform you, really no criterion by which it may be properly valued. Will you look here for a moment; look through this glass—ah, here is the adjustment—yes, like that. Do you see?"

Miss Abby saw. It came abruptly into focus as she turned gingerly the adjustment-screw in the great magnifying instrument which stood upon the table, below the sight of which the tiny, gilt clasp was held in place by small clamps. She saw, but she could not speak. For she was petrified. The inscription, far too fine even to be noticed without the aid of a powerful magnifying agent, read:

ELIZABETH, FROM RALEIGH.

Miss Abby took a deep, deliberate breath, and read it aloud, slowly, in a tiny, clear and perfectly audible voice, not at all like her ordinary voice, in the midst of a dead silence. Miss Abby felt again as though she were going to faint. She could not be sure; she had never fainted before! But she needed air, badly, just then. She did not faint. She was too much interested to faint just then!

She listened very carefully to Dr. Schwartz, who seemed to be speaking in a very muffled, distant voice. He was saying:

". . .So that Dufane and Company are prepared, in case you are willing to dispose of this necklace, to pay the sum of two hundred and fifty-thousand dollars. We feel bound to inform you, however, that if you care to hold it—your title is undoubtedly clear—and decide to offer it to the British Museum, it is not unlikely that. . . ."

Miss Abby did not wish to hear any more. She had heard enough, she thought. With lightning-like rapidity she reviewed the various estimates upon the value of the necklace: "Sixteen bob."—"Well, I should be inclined to think, about five hundred dollars."—that was Mr. Leverett. Then Mr. Hay: "We are prepared . . . to give you our cheque for six thousand . . ." And now—"Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars!" And it had cost her twelve shillings, twelve shillings, bargained for; argued over! She straightened up in her chair, and looked Dr. Schwartz in the eye.

"I will accept your offer," she said simply. Then the bedlam broke out afresh. Men were crowding about her, pressing towards her . . . She fainted for the first—and last—time in her life.

The next evening she arrived home, tired out. The hotel bill had been rather more than she had anticipated, and with that and the railway fares nearly all her ready money was gone. In fact, she arrived at her boarding-house with precisely eight cents in coins and a certified cheque for two hundred and fifty-thousand dollars.

The first thing she did after removing her gloves, was to get a cup of tea. She needed the tea badly. When she had drunk it she noticed a large letter "L" in the bottom of the cup. It looked rather like the shape of Lucerne outlined in its lights in the evening as one gazed down upon that city from the heights of Mt. Pilatus—as Miss Abby had, in fact, looked down upon it three months previously. She sighed, reminiscently, and laid down her teacup.

In her bedroom she found a letter on the bureau. The postmark was Bellow's Falls. She opened and read it. It was from Mr. Leverett. He wrote to ask if he might have the privilege of coming over soon to call upon her. He suggested the next Sunday afternoon, if she were not otherwise engaged then. Miss Abby was not otherwise engaged. "I'll have those custom duties to pay," she thought, irrelevantly, as she finished her letter.

She stood there in her bedroom with her letter in her hand. The eight cents and the certified cheque lay before her, side by side on the mean little bureau which had served her now continuously for some thirteen years. Miss Abby looked back over those thirteen years with her mind's eye, looked back, and shuddered. They had been dreary years, those thirteen. Then she ventured to look forward into the possible future—a tiny peep. She glanced appraisingly at the bureau and about her room and out the window. Then, without so much as removing her hat, she read Mr. Leverett's letter through a second time, and glanced down at the coins and the cheque.

Miss Abby looked up from the very end of her letter, where Mr. Leverett had signed his name, modestly, without any flourish, and in the glass. She caught herself blushing.

"I believe I shall marry him," said she, in a whisper, and started to take the pins out of her hat.

An Interesting Narrative of the Land of King Tut

An Egyptian Lotus

By MRS. CHETWOOD SMITH

WHEN Johnny Asher, reporter, amateur detective, good fellow and several other things besides, received the assignment for Egypt, to report on the discoveries at the tomb of King Tutankhamen, he went out into the aisle between the desks, and turned a somersault.

It was only a fluke of luck his getting the appointment from his New England Daily; Johnny fully realized that. If there had been any doubts in his mind on the matter, they would have been dispelled by his interview with the Chief.

"It's rotten luck having no one but you to send," declared that great man, glaring morosely at Johnny's eager young face.

"Yes, Sir," said Johnny meekly.

"But we're short handed as it is and if Steffanson will go and get his legs smashed in a fool motor accident, what can I do—"

Egypt! Johnny Asher could hardly believe that he was really there.

In the evening of his arrival at the big hotel in Luxor, he sat after dinner, watching the groups that swayed about the lobby and terraces, or sat at little tables that were flower-heaped and softly lit. The color and motion and music in the setting of the perfumed glistening Egyptian night, were like a glamourous picture in a play. Distinguished men and beautiful women, mingled with the

crowd of tourists, for it was the eve of a great event.

Within a short time, a matter perhaps of only days, the tomb of King Tutankhamen was to be opened, by the allied committees on explorations, and vast were the hopes of scientific and antiquarian discoveries. With a thrill, Johnny told himself, that he was an actor, albeit a humble one, in the making of history. He gazed with awe upon the Orientals, high in Officialdom, who glided about, their aloof dignity lending impressiveness to the scene. Johnny Asher did not realize that his own, clean American good looks were noticeable, even in that throng, and that more than one head turned to glance again, at his broad shoulders, and merry blue eyes.

Seeing a group of pressmen, one of whom he knew slightly, smoking and drinking coffee in a corner, Johnny joined them, and was welcomed, with the freemasonry of their mutual craft.

"People are so excited, and interested in all these Egyptian superstitions," said one of the younger men, "that they will swallow any impossible tale."

"Impossible?" echoed Johnny's acquaintance, Gregory Brown. "Well, I've been in Egypt three times, and I know things are true out here, that I wouldn't believe for a moment, back home in Cincinnati."

"Of course," said Johnny earnestly. "Anyway, I came from Massachusetts, and it's in my blood to believe in witchcraft."

The others laughed.

"What about these rumors of poisons," said another man, "being hidden in the tombs and which are supposed to be just as powerful as when they were put there, thousands of years ago?"

"Anything is possible in Egypt," insisted Gregory Brown.

"And they say that the tombs are haunted by spirits, that are the guardians of the dead. I suppose Asher believes that too."

"Implicitly," declared Johnny, with a twinkle of his blue eyes.

"You must look out for yourselves," drawled a thin, cadaverous looking man. "Venus inhabits the hills to the west of us, across the Nile. I understand it is one of her original homes, and under her Egyptian name of Athor, she springs up every evening, ready for fresh conquests."

"And we see her as a star," sighed the youngest reporter sentimentally.

"She is also figuratively represented," murmured the thin one, "as a spotted cow!"

Laughing, the group broke up.

DECLINING an invitation to join in a trip to the native dance halls of Luxor, Johnny Asher wandered out by himself on to a terrace, and stood contemplating the foreign view before him. Near by, the native village, over the feathery tops of the palms, and date trees. Beyond, the Nile, pouring in drowsy majesty in its ages-old way, and hanging over it, a low silver netting woven of stars so brilliant and so close the constellations seemed, in the hot, breathless Egyptian night. The sound of stringed instruments vibrated through the thick, fragrant air, and soft singing, scored now and then with a long, melodious call from the river. Johnny, responsive to the magical beauty of it all, sniffed and listened delightedly.

Presently he became aware that one little minor refrain was being sung, over and over again, just beneath him, where a great mass of purple bougainvilleas flowed down against the yellow walls of the terrace. Only a lilting phrase or two, hauntingly sad and sweet. Lured by the reiteration of its rhythm, and by the glamour and mystery of the night, Johnny swung himself over the railing, and through its smothering foliage. He landed on an open esplanade, or walk.

In the brilliant starlight, stood the figure of a girl, slight and graceful, closely shrouded in the cloak and veil of Eastern womanhood. Against the neutral gray of her garments, gleamed at her breast one wide blossom, which seemed to have retained on its curving petals the blue of day's sky. Was it from that pearly flower, that stole the odor of white hands plashing in reedy streams? Came the few, plaintive notes again, merely breathed this time, from behind a filmy veil that the young American felt sure, hid lips of a more burning crimson than any he had ever known. He moved nearer the tantalizing form. Nearer—and nearer, until he could see in the balmy light, the girl's dark eyes above her veil. They were blazing at him, languishing at him; teasing, tempting, forbidding, until he felt his head swim.

If he only knew a few words of her language. Johnny could but sigh with rapture, which he felt to be fatuous—and move still closer to the object of his sudden infatuation. The girl, however, drew back coquettishly as he advanced and he stopped for fear of driving her away.

Her startled movement had loosened the flower at her bosom, and Johnny caught it up almost before it touched the ground. As he pressed it passionately to his mouth, there came an unmistakable giggle from behind that maddening veil. With out-flung arms, Johnny sprang for her. But she eluded him, by bending lithely aside and vanished through the encircling greenery, and Johnny collided violently with a man, uprising under his very feet. He must have lain concealed, under the dense shadow of the hedge.

A beggar evidently, as his greasy rags and bare legs proclaimed. A sturdy and vigorous beggar, for he laid so fast hold of Johnny, whining out an importunate appeal for alms, that the American had much ado to fling him off. Indeed, the two staggered together through the hedge of oleanders, and out on to the brightly lighted steps of the hotel, greatly to the amusement of the tourists gathered there. Asher cursing angrily, and the beggar clinging like a burr to the tail of his dinner jacket.

One glance assured Asher that there was no sign of her he sought. Furiously embarrassed by the laughter directed at his plight, he turned upon his pursuer, but seeing the man's face for the first time in the clear light, he recoiled involuntarily. The beggar's swarthy countenance was seared with vicious lines, his right eye was gone, and he was indeed sufficiently ugly, to justify disgust. But what had startled Johnny was his appalling expression of hatred and malignancy. To end so unpleasant and silly a scene, Johnny crushed a silver coin into the beggar's hand, and escaped into the hotel.

Once in his own room, he examined devotedly the flower, which he had guarded. It was a Lotus, of the celestial blue, and its cool fragrance seemed like an emanation from the enchanting girl of the garden.

Johnny went to bed that night with his head in a whirl, and quite ready to believe in any amount of Egyptian sorcery.

THE next morning, Johnny Asher, with his confréres crossed the Nile, by the Luxor ferry. To their left and right the great, flat river swept away in sleepy reaches, the ripples on its edges, hissing against the sands as if they touched molten gold. Graceful dahabiyehs, with pointed sails like bird's wings, veered and turned and dipped in the hot sun. Wonderful spaces of desert showed on the river's banks; sands of blazing primrose and amber, lanced here and there by clear edged, black shadows of rolling hills. The sky was of an exquisite turquoise, and high against it, on a billowy sand dune, Johnny saw a frieze of camels, moving in slow, quaint swaying.

"That's Clarence Langshaw's private dahabiyeh," remarked Gregory Brown, as he leaned by Johnny's side.

"Who's he?" asked Johnny.

"One of the richest newspaper men, in the middle west," replied Gregory. "His fad is buying small newspapers, and building up their circulation."

"Wish I knew him," sighed the youngest reporter.

"He's got his daughter with him—Ethelbert—or some such name," volunteered the man who had talked of Venus the evening before. "I've seen her—she's a peach."

"Is she?" said Johnny, his handsome young face quite indifferent.

He was not interested in any girl save one, whose spiritlike flower was carefully pressed and folded away in his pocketbook.

They landed, and on donkeys, took their way across the level area near the river, which was covered for more than a mile at high water. Now, camels were bringing full water jars, whose precious liquid was to be emptied into mud troughs, that were protected by woven mats. Soon the pressmen reached the barren waste of tawny foot hills, and beyond rose the rough mountainous cliffs, among which were hidden the treasures of old, that they had come to study.

Today was principally spent in waiting about in the terrific sunshine at the Tomb of the Kings. Hours were passed in watching important looking officials, Egyptian and English, bustle in and out of passages, and excavated openings, in the cliffs. They were followed by various attendants, and native bearers in white robes.

Johnny returned to his hotel at night with few notes, and a pounding headache. An hour's nap and a bath, however, restored him to all his accustomed enthusiasm.

After dinner, he spent some time strolling about the hotel, in the hopes of seeing the girl of the lotus flower—but his quest was unrewarded.

It was strange, he thought, how disappointed he felt. How could her personality have made so deep an impression upon him, in only one, and that a very mystifying, interview?

At last he hired a dragoman, from among those hanging about, outside the hotel, and signified his desire to go through the native village.

Narrow alleys of fathomless blackness, between mud walls; open doorways whence came sounds of music and streamlets of light, through which glided inky forms with water jars balanced upon their heads. A sudden flutter of a scarlet robe, flashing by, and the glitter of a shiny headdress and a tinkling laugh, lingering behind like a bright reflection.

Turtle doves cooed, and running water rustled refreshingly. In a lighted courtyard a wandering magician had spread his cloth. He performed his marvels to astonished spectators, who leaned upon each other's shoulders, stripping sugar cane with their gleaming teeth, while gaunt dogs prowled hungrily on the outskirts.

Fascinated, Johnny loitered along, listening to his dragoman's droning explanations.

Suddenly he stopped short. He had caught the melody of that plaintive song, which had so intrigued him the evening before.

It came from an open doorway on his right, and without the slightest hesitation Johnny stepped into its archway. The interior was dimly lit, and at first he could make out only some flitting gray shapes. There was a shuffling and a whispering. The next instant a tiny light sprang up, and Johnny had a confused glimpse of a low divan, heaped with cushions, behind which hung a blue curtain.

He had no time—or—wish—to absorb other details. For rising from the divan was the girl of the lotus flower. The same cloak and veil, the same slight shape, the same great dark eyes, beaming shadows in the uncertain light. What potent spell came from her?

What floating, insidious perfume ravished his senses? What misty incense transported him to uncharted regions of elysian but strangely enervating bliss?

As in a trance, Johnny saw himself taking out his faded blossom to show her; saw her in an abandonment of responsive delight, tear a fresh blue lotus from her bosom, saw himself put both flowers carefully away over his heart.

He heard his dragoman calling him anxiously from without. But the door had unaccountably and most conveniently closed, and Johnny had no wish to open it. In fact, he never wished to move again.

Then all in a breath, everything seemed to happen at once. The girl of the lotus flower, illusive, witching, was on his breast; in the very second that his arms closed about the willowy, yielding body, she fell away from him; there was a cry of agony; and the hideous, one-eyed beggar sprang again from some concealing shadows, near the door and flung his loathsome rags, with mad fury upon Johnny. Taken unawares, bewildered and half hypnotized as he was, Asher staggered back from the onslaught, and brought up against the wall with a crash. Before he could recover himself, he saw to his horror the beggar turn to the cowering girl, and bring both clenched fists down brutally upon her head. As Johnny sprang for him, the room was full of fighting forms—men poured through an inner door, and among them he was overcome.

By this time, his dragoman had succeeded in bursting open the outer door. But his entrance only completed Johnny's defeat, for the dragoman joined with the beggar's devils of friends in hustling the American from the house. In vain Johnny struck and twisted and raged. Before his very eyes, the girl of the lotus flower was being beaten and thrust into the inner recesses of the house, while he was ignominiously forced out into the street. Men were running up the alley ways, now, jabbering, excited and menacing, their feet padding through the dark.

"Come away, Sir, come away," gasped the dragoman, as Asher fairly danced with fury before the closed door. "I can do no more with them, and I am responsible for your safety."

"What do I care for you and your responsibility?" Johnny panted, half sobbing with despair. "But you're all too much for me, I can't fight a whole village, of course. But if I go now, I'll get help at the hotel and come back to—to rescue *her*."

"Yes, Sir, yes, if you will only come now," pleaded the dragoman.

When, however, he reached the hotel, Asher was sick and faint. Moreover, a deathly reaction had him in its numbing grasp.

WHETHER he had received rougher handling in the one-eyed beggar's house than he had realized, or whether it was the chilly recoil from the tearing emotions of some delicious incantation there cast upon him, Johnny could not determine.

Exhausted and puzzled, he sat by his open window, and tried to think through his problems.

Rescue—rescue for his lovely lotus blossom.

By all his quivering nerves, he felt assured that she returned his suddenly absorbing passion. If he did not move, to what ghastly fate was that innocent child reserved? Could the one-eyed old monster be her father? Could such exquisite youth have sprung from so shocking a wreck? Evidently, however, she was completely in his power for the present, and Johnny had only the vaguest notions of how far under Egyptian law,

he could interfere with parental or guardian authority.

Then, suppose that he succeeded against all obstacles, in rescuing her—which meant taking her away from her own home and people—what on earth could he do, with a beautiful Egyptian damsel of whose language even he did not speak one word, and of whose religion he had only the wildest ideas as to its being an idolatrous flummery? He could not conceivably marry her, and take her home to his own New England town. He had a momentary vision of her taking tea, Sunday night, with his Aunt Priscilla.

As to any other relationship—Johnny shook his head. Although he had knocked about, taking care of himself since he was thirteen, he was a gentleman, and quite simply, he decided now, that an entanglement was entirely out of the question.

He went to bed, feeling virtuous, and worried, and decidedly low in his mind.

The next day's work was a repetition of the preceding one's.

In the late afternoon, the crowd of pressmen had returned to the ferry crossing the Nile, and were about to embark on their homeward way. Johnny was chatting with Gregory Brown, when he noticed one of the donkey boys, loitering persistently near, in his picturesque dress of baggy white trousers, turban, and gay striped cotton jacket, Johnny had never seen the boy before, but he realized that he was making urgent signs, as if desirous of secretly attracting his attention.

With a casual word or two, Johnny strolled away from his companions. As he passed the Egyptian lad, the latter with sly cunning, slipped into Johnny's hand a small packet of coarse paper. Within it, lay in fragrant beauty, a blue lotus flower, and on the paper were written some Egyptian characters which Johnny could not read, and the English word: "help," thrice repeated.

The blood rushed to Johnny's head. His pathetic darling! In trouble, and appealing to him. Not the faintest hesitation clogged the spring of his whole being towards her, in chivalrous self-spending. Eagerly he looked about for the Egyptian lad. He had turned back now, leading an unusually large and fresh appearing donkey, and made vehement signs to Asher to mount.

NOT WISHING to encounter the ridicule of his fellow craftsmen, should they divine his errand, yet realizing that he could not go back over the level sands without their seeing him, Asher called to them a hasty and purposely incoherent, explanation of having forgotten something, and being obliged to go back to the Tombs of the Kings. Then springing upon the donkey, he made off as fast as the creature could go, the boy in evident delight, running by his side.

He heard Gregory and the others, shouting vague remonstrances, but he only waved his hand, in reassurance and farewell.

"Crazy lad! What on earth is he up to now!" ejaculated Gregory. "It isn't safe to go off like that alone, with twilight coming on. The hills are full of robbers and every kind of devilment."

"Oh! he'll be right back," declared one of the men, who did not want his own dinner delayed.

"Besides," added another, "there are a lot of people still at the tombs. Asher will come down with some of them."

After all, it was really no body's business what Johnny Asher chose to do. So having cast an anxious glance or two after his fast retreating figure, Gregory Brown embarked with the others.

But his friends' anxiety would have been greatly augmented, had they known that it was not towards the Tombs of the Kings, that Johnny's youthful guide was leading him.

When the boy first urged the donkey out of the beaten path, and towards the more unfrequented part of the hills, lying to their left, Johnny had jerked the animal to a standstill. But the boy had used a potent method to overcome his doubts. He pointed to the pocket where he had seen Johnny place the lotus flower, and made heartrending signals of distress. It was sufficient. Johnny abandoned himself again to the guidance of the young Egyptian.

Before them now, the craggy range of the Western hills cropped up purple and darkly mysterious, against the fast fading sunset lights. Venus—Athor—blazed in startling radiance, and to her, Johnny consecrated his mission with a queer, superstitious certainty that she would see him through.

On they went, over the heaps and billows of pale sand, mouse color in the ashy light, and tempest and wind wrought into dreary, uneven hummocks. Sands gave place to arid, broken rocks, melancholy with the silence of barrenness. Rapidly they jogged towards the eminence of clifts, towering high and ragged. Utter loneliness spread around them its eerie appealing charm.

A dozen excellent reasons presented themselves to Asher, for going back; only one for proceeding. But that one was of such overwhelming importance, that it swallowed up all opposing arguments. His lotus flower called.

NIGHT came, with the quickness of desert climes. Myriads of stars hung in the sultry sky, heavily, as if almost ready to slide down on shafts of their own sparkles. They throbbed and hummed in well-nigh unbearable beauty and in colors unknown and unsung.

Why had he been such a fool leave his good American gun him? Why had he been such a double-dyed fool as to bring his money with him? Why had he not persuaded some of his acquaintances to share the adventure with him? At last, and at least, thought Asher grimly, as he gazed up at the cliff now looming directly over him, and then around at the darkness, tangible as curtaining velvet—why had he not given Gregory some inkling where to lead the search for his body?

Suddenly, the Egyptian laid a detaining hand on the bridle, and stopped the panting donkey. Then he gave a long, soaring call, repeating it at intervals three times. Before Johnny had time to do more than wonder what this new proceeding meant, a light gleamed, in the side of the cliff, to the foot of which they had closely approached. The light showed itself to be in a cave, and outlined the rugged entrance. The boy gurgled a phrase of satisfaction, and pulled suggestively at Johnny's arm.

But the young American needed no such prompting to dismount. For he saw drift into the haze of lemon and silver light, a graceful veiled form. In a frame of night he saw her—and on her breast a lotus flower.

Jumping from the donkey Asher flung himself at the rocks, calling upon his guide to assist him in finding a way up them. But the young rascal only sprang into the vacated saddle and made off into the night, the diminishing clatter of hoofs, rising through the hot air, to warn Johnny of his deserted state.

Scrambling madly to gain a footing, Johnny stumbled and almost fell over, what to his joy proved to be the beginning of a crude flight of steps, cut in the limestone. Up these he rushed, seeing to his dismay, as he did so, a brawny hand seize the girl and drag her back from the entrance of the cave. As he clambered within it, she was already at some little distance, being hurried away from him into a low, winding passage or ravine, that penetrated the rocks. The muffled form who compelled her forward, carried a torch, and the haste of their going caused its spluttering light to waver and sink.

Johnny dashed after them, shouting commands and prayers, and he thought he heard her voice, in faint, imploring answer. But he could not gain upon the fleeing couple, for so twisting and so rough was the path, as it led deeper and deeper among the hills, that he was constantly delayed by bringing up with a bang, against some projecting rock, masked by the uncertain light.

Then with a final flare, the torch was totally extinguished.

Darkness seemed to leap upon him like a creature of actuality, and cling, impeding his progress. Perforce, he had now to feel his way slowly forward. He still shouted from time to time; weird echoes tumbling back.

The ravine or chasm, spread out into wider spaces and here and there Johnny caught glimpses of the starry sky, through riven apertures. It was more by sensing, than by actual knowledge, that he knew subterranean sepulchers, excavated mummy-pits, honeycombed the rocks, and yawned treacherously for his lost and faltering footsteps.

Now began heavings and motions of the air, soft flutterings as unseen wings whimpered by him. Came now, a shrill, tiny shriek.

"The spirits, that guard these hell-holes of tombs, in ravening throes at my desecrating presence!" shuddered Johnny's imagination.

"Bats!" grunted Johnny's common-sense.

Then, all of a sudden, as he stumbled round a shelf of rock, he caught a gleam of light. With renewed hope, he pressed on. A couple more corners turned, and he was in a square room or cave. The torch relighted and stuck in a metal holder, showed the walls, crudely decorated with forbidding monstrosities, queer Egyptian delineations in black and scarlet. In the center—motionless—was the fair form he sought. Again the sweet, enervating incense filled the air, inundating his whole being.

But what is this! His longing arms, closing upon her, fell apart as if galvanized; his glad cry, was choked into a gasp of horror. For the veil, falling, had disclosed the shriveled, distorted features of an old hag. Wonderful Egyptian eyes—yes—but bald and toothless, with dried, and yellowing flesh.

HE HAD been deceived by devilish cunning. His lotus flower girl did not exist, had never existed, save in his own loving fancy. Vaporous fumes of a deadly deliciousness bewildered him. Was it really the emaciated, half-naked form of an impish, filthy crone, old, oh! so old, who danced before him, with yelps of derision, or was it a demon, risen from the graves of these accursed hills, to torment and confound him?

With a last mocking shout, the old hag dashed the torch to the ground.

In the ensuing blackness, Johnny felt no surprise at being pounced upon by several men at once. It seemed he would never feel any emotion again. The mental shock, coming upon his overwrought state, the demoralizing relaxation of the perfume whose deathly fumes palsied his very thoughts, rendered him callous to what now became of him.

He struggled, however, with hopeless gallantry, again overwhelming odds, but was thrown to the ground; his feet bound together, and his hands tied behind his back. His captors, panting and chattering gruesomely in the dark, proceeded to search his pockets. Johnny could not bring himself to care greatly, when his watch and money and all his smaller valuables were rifled. So that was the meaning of it all, was it? Robbery!

Johnny wondered dully what was the price of dreams.

Suddenly he came to his full senses with an agonizing jolt. Twice before he had felt those awful slimy rags; those powerful hands. The one-eyed beggar was aiding the other men to force over his head a stifling bag. Now indeed, Johnny put forth all his strength, in a mad effort for freedom. But unavailingly. The bag was crushed close and its folds fastened tightly about his neck.

With an awful despair, Johnny heard retreating footsteps; knew that the men had gone; knew that he was abandoned. He was strangling, suffocating, dying—alone and betrayed.

But the healthy surge of his blood, bade him make one more effort for life—bare life, which had never seemed so sweet before. Beating down the panic dizziness which was assailing him, he heaved his strong young body, up against the rocks beside him, striving desperately to tear off the bag. His lungs were bursting, it could not last long. His totally unguided struggles, frantic and helpless, as he turned and wrenched, caused him to cover some little distance. Suddenly he realized with sickening terror, that he was on the edge of a precipice. Before he could stop himself, he was rolling over the verge.

It was in reality his salvation. For in falling, the bag caught on a sharp spear of rock, and ripped open. Badly gouged as his head was at the same time, the rush of air to his suffocating lungs—fresh as if with Heaven's dew—revived him. And the fall was not considerable, merely a few feet to a bed of comparatively soft and crumbling shale.

Air—blessed air. Johnny lay taking great breaths, and hardly feeling the blood that dripped down from the cut on his head.

But what if the one-eyed ruffian should return, and with his companions, decide to torture him, in his abject helplessness? An unbalanced fear prodded Johnny to roll about in the darkness, until he located a sharp flint and succeeded in filing through the cords that bound his feet, a slow and painful process. Not daring to waste time in freeing his arms, but submitting to the misery of their cramped muscles, he staggered up and began an endeavor to find some way out of the graveyard of hills.

With the blood trickling down on to the torn bag dangling about his neck he moved cautiously forward. He was obliged to test each turning with outstretched foot, les his sink into some mummy-hole, some frightful cavern of death. At intervals, his dazed glances saw stars, through rifts in the imprisoning crags and each one was Athor, beaming in serene unconcern. Ah! his lost love.

On and on he wandered, groping through endless, inter-communicating channels. It seemed as if he had been moving forever through these dark places of solitude. He was becoming exhausted. The loss of blood from the wound on his head; the hours of exertion in the sultry air; and the thirst which brought a burning fever, combined with the after effects of the vitiating perfume, to sap and drain away his strength.

Only a certain doggedness of courage, which remained when all hope had gone, kept him moving now. He knew if he let himself sit down to rest, he would never go on again. His arms had stopped hurting, they were lucky—they were already dead!

He saw all sorts of things, whirling in snapping splinters of light, about him. He heard all sorts of voices. He was conscious of replying to them politely, once or twice. This struck him as funny, and he laughed aloud, but the sound of his own laughter frightened him horribly. Was he going mad!

The fixed idea that he must keep on walking had became an obsession with him. When therefore, his progress was at last blocked by a smooth wall of metal, he inanely tried to walk through it. It did not seem to him at all peculiar that his pushing shoulder caused the metal wall to move. Nor was he surprised, when with a rumbling, it slid back, dis-

closing an incline, up which soared a flood of light.

Doltishly he stumbled down the sloping path, and found himself at its foot, in a large hall, full of the soft refulgence of reflected lights. The walls were splendidly decorated with Egyptian paintings of most elaborate execution and vivid coloring, group after group, among which writhed the endless coils and folds of enormous serpents. The roof was covered with golden stars, crowns and winged-globes. Was it Athor?

In his torn and blood-stained clothes Johnny stood, swaying unsteadily.

Then from the far end of the rocky chamber, there floated toward him, the well-known cloaked figure; willowy, erect, graceful. But the veil was gone, to reveal a girl's face, fair with youth. The same dark eyes, into which he had closely gazed, in a garden once, in the far distant past, by a bougainvillea vine.

Then a surprised, young voice cried out:

"Oh! Father look! Here's a man, and he's hurt."

"And you," remarked Johnny, quite casually, "are a girl."

Whereupon he pitched forward in a swoon at the feet of Ethelbert Langshaw.

When Johnny regained his senses, lying comfortably on a steamer rug; someone rubbing his numbed arms and someone else dropping chilled water between his lips; he still thought he was in some sort of Egyptian heaven. For over him leaned the lovely lotus flower girl, and she did not really exist, he knew.

IT WAS some little time before he could understand that his involuntary rescuers, were a party of Americans, from Mr. Langshaw's dahabiyeh, who had come in the cool of the dawn—for Asher's adventure had lasted a whole night long—to observe one of the electrically lighted tombs.

"Lucky for you, young man, that we came," declared Clarence Langshaw emphatically. "That you should have accidentally opened the panel above there, is not so strange, but how on earth did you ever find your way to it, alone and in such a condition?"

Johnny, pulling himself together, told all his amazing story, adding his belief that he had been drugged, both in the one-eyed beggar's house, and in the robbers' den.

"Quite likely," commented Mr. Langshaw, "these people have almost uncanny knowledge of perfumes and poisons and potions of all kinds."

"I can explain some part of these mysteries," said Ethelbert Langshaw, as she sat by Johnny's side. "I was the girl in the garden, night before last."

"You were!" cried Johnny in ecstasy.

"Yes," said Ethelbert with a most becoming blush. "I was waiting for you, Father. I did not see the beggar. I was singing a little song, one of our boatmen taught me. I had noticed Mr. Asher sitting with Gregory Brown, so when he jumped over the terrace, I, Oh! I just thought I'd have a little fun. Of course," she added with a tilt of her pretty chin, "I never thought I'd be found out, and I have not seen Mr. Asher from then, until just now."

"This really explains everything," said Mr. Langshaw, who seemed to be trying to hide a smile of amused indulgence, as he shook his head at his embarrassed daughter. "The beggar was clever enough to notice that an Egyptian girl, as he may really have thought Ethelbert, who wears their costume for convenience, had attracted you, and he saw a chance of profit in developing your fancy for them."

"But how did he know I was going to the native village?" asked Johnny.

"Simply by having a spy in the grounds of the hotel to notify him when to set the stage for your benefit."

"How could I have been so incredibly stupid?" murmured Johnny, looking up at Ethelbert, who comforted him with a fugitive little smile of forgiveness.

"My knowledge of the Egyptian character," continued Mr. Langshaw, "leads me to believe that those men did not mean to leave you to die—they fear their own government too much. They undoubtedly went back to try and force more money from you, like a ransom. But your fortunate fall cheated them."

"You will try to have them arrested, won't you?" asked one of the party.

"Not if he takes my advice," said Mr. Langshaw, and Johnny earnestly signified his willingness to do so. "It would be only a useless expense and trouble. The one-eyed beggar, the old hag, and the donkey boy will vanish, and every one else in the place will swear no such persons ever existed."

"I will most certainly be guided by you," said Johnny.

"Then you must allow me," said the older man gracefully, "since my advice precludes your recovering your valuables, and also because it was really my madcap daughter's prank that led you into all the trouble in the beginning, to offer you the opportunity of writing some articles on your impressions of Egypt, for one of the papers in which I am interested."

"I shall be most grateful, Sir," said Johnny simply.

An hour later, he sat by Ethelbert's side in the Langshaws' dahabiyeh.

Dreams sometimes come true.

The Nile, in broad tender blues, stretched away to the sea from the sunlight. Inevitable in its flowing, and inscrutable as of old, when in forgotten rites, there had mingled with its waters, wines of sacrifice, and mauve flowers and sweetest juices of fruits. It had carried lovers before.

Johnny took from his breast, the three lotus blossoms and showed them to Ethelbert.

"This is yours," he said, indicating the most faded, "the one you dropped in the garden." Then he threw the others into the Nile.

"I have something to confess," murmured Ethelbert.

Johnny glanced over his shoulder. No one was observing them. He moved close, very close to the graceful, shrouded form.

"Tell me," he whispered, "and then, I will confess something."

"I dropped it on purpose," she said.

Deaths by Lightning

AT a burying place called Ahade, in the county of Donegal, in Ireland, there was lately dug up a piece of flat stone, about three feet by two, the device on which was a figure of Death, with a bow and arrow, shooting at a woman with a boy in her arms; and underneath was an inscription in Irish characters, of which the following is a translation:

"Here are deposited, with a design of mingling them with the parent earth from which the mortal part came, a mother who loved her son to the hour of his death. She clasped him to her bosom with all the joy of a parent, the pulse of whose heart beat with maternal affection; and in the very moment whilst the gladness of joy danced in the pupil of the boy's eyes, and the mother's bosom swelled with transport—Death's arrow, in a flash of lightning, pierced them both in a vital part, and totally dissolving the entrails of the son, without injuring his skin, and burning to a cinder the liver of the mother, sent them out of this world at one and the same moment of time, in the year 1343."

DEEP SEA GAME

By ARTHUR J. MESSIER

WHEN a fishing launch is sighted putting into the Crescent Bay of Avalon at Catalina Island, the vacationists look seaward with interest. If the approaching launch displays a tuna flag—symbolic of having caught at least one of that game fish—the interest is manifested in expressions of "Let's go see if it's big enough to get a button from the Tuna Club."

But when the mast of the little craft carries both tuna and swordfish flags, the interest is displayed in action. The boardwalk is vacated. Purchases in the little stores along Wriglet Way are curtailed. Small boys take up the cry of "Fishin' boat's comin' in! Fishin' boat's comin' in!" and long before the fishing launch has reached the float at the end of the pier, the concerted movement from all sides has abruptly taken on the semblance of an exodus. Each man, woman and child striving to be the first to reach the end of the pier and gain the first glimpse of fisherman and catch.

It was on one of such occasions that two men, plainly from the desert country, were caught by the turmoil from a point about the middle of the pier and carried unwillingly by curious, onrushing hordes, until the two bewildered men were pressed flat against the rail at the extreme end of the pier and it seemed that they must necessarily jump into the ocean and swim ashore if they valued their lives.

One of them, a broad-shouldered, blue-eyed, placid man with a tinge of color under tanned cheeks, was Dick Brownell of the revenue service. The man with him was Jack Crowley, the tall, slim, red-headed Texan who had accompanied Brownell on so many expeditions against smugglers along the Mexican border.

"Wh—what do you make of it?" he breathlessly asked, plainly angered by his treatment from the mob.

"Guess they're more anxious than you and me, Jack," coolly returned Brownell. "They want to see li'l tuna and li'l swordfish," he added, easing his body from the railing with his broad hairy hand.

Just then, the fishing launch that had been responsible for the commotion touched at the float. The bushy-browed captain threw a hawser to a waiting attendant and the launch came to, rising and falling gently with the ground swells.

A sun-burned, stocky man in careful fishing togs slowly rose from one of the swivel chairs at the stern, stepped on the rail and jumped to the float.

Brownell's hand suddenly gripped Crowley's arms. His face was tense as he kept his eyes on the fisherman, then it relaxed into a peculiar combination of smiling lips and steady, obstinate eyes. It was Brownell's characteristic smile of action. The smile that always came to him with the grim determination to fight—and win out.

"What's the big idea?" gruffly demanded Crowley.

"Trail him, Jack," Brownell quietly leaned over and whispered. "Find out all you can about what he's doing here."

"Suppose you do that little thing yourself," obstinately retorted Crowley. "I'm here on a vacation, and this is my first day."

"It's Bowser, Chic Bowser," said Brownell, keeping his eyes on the man. "He'll know me the moment he sets eyes on me. Big game going on, Jack. Otherwise, he wouldn't be here."

Crowley looked at the fisherman appraisingly, scowled as he glanced back at Brownell, then shrugged hopelessly and wormed his way along the rail to the plank that ran up from the float and waited.

Bowser was helping unload the fish to the float. This task finished, he spoke in undertones to the captain, then came up the plank.

Brownell kept looking down at the float. Seemingly, he was engrossed in the novel sight afforded by the big yellow fin tuna and the three hundred pound marlin, but his mind was far off. He was thinking of that night three years ago when Chic Bowser had wounded him in a running fight—and gotten away. Thinking how the boys had jeered and called him an infant when he had been forced to report failure in capturing the smuggler. "I'll get him, somewhere, some time," he had boasted in hurt pride. And now Bowser had bobbed up when he was least expected.

Brownell risked a glance over his shoulder. He could see Bowser in the thinning mob fifty feet away, protesting against the efforts of an "official" photographer. No wonder he refused to be photographed with his catch. Too many people were apt to see the picture of the "sportsman" when posted in the glass case with other record breakers.

Vaguely, he heard the captain remark that it had taken thirty minutes to land the swordfish and that it had jumped nineteen times. He watched the enormous yellow fin tuna being carried across the float, up the plank to the pier itself; but it held no particular interest for him. He was thinking of Bowser, trying to formulate some plan that would land the smuggler. Still, no plan could be complete without Crowley's report. But what was Bowser's game? Why was he in Catalina? Smuggling of course, but why choose a base so remote from the Mexican border?

He heard a yell back of him. It was the captain importuning a helper for so carelessly handling the fish. "Didn't you hear me say the big ones are to be mounted!" the man bellowed. "Pick 'em up and carry 'em to the scales!"

In a flash, it came to him. That was part of the scheme—mounting that fish. Why else would a man like Bowser have them mounted? That was it. Bowser was smuggling opium to the mainland in the stuffed fish! But where did he get it? Mexico, no doubt. Perhaps he brought it up in that fishing launch.

He fell in with the group that was surrounding the Tuna Club's official scales. Saw the scale register two hundred and forty pounds. Heard the comment of admiration and the captain's statement that it was the biggest yellow fin in years, but it was not the breaking of records that brought a smile to his lips—it was the thought of the number of cans of brown sticky stuff that could be concealed in the fish when mounted.

He must get to that launch, somehow. Maybe it would reveal something important. He touched the captain's arm.

"You run the *Gray Goose?*" he inquired.

"Yep," said the captain, struggling to maintain his hold on one end of the tuna as it was being lifted from the scales.

"I've been wondering if I could rent it for a few days."

The captain shook his head. "Chartered for the season. But if it's to go fishing, my son's got a launch—the *Lollito*. He knows the fishing grounds as well as I do." He produced a card and handed it over. "You'll find him on the pier after supper; locker number fourteen," he added.

Brownell pocketed the card. This did not please him. He had his mind set on getting on the *Gray Goose* before Crowley returned. Now it appeared that the visit must be indefinitely delayed.

He returned to the end of the pier, produced his pipe, filled it and, almost deliberately, he applied a match. "Chartered for the season," he mused. "We'll have to shorten that season."

The *Gray Goose* was shoved off. The captain threw in the clutch and the launch veered to the right and headed directly for a small row boat two hundred yards from the float. In a moment, the *Gray Goose* lay at anchor and the captain was rowing back to the pier.

BROWNELL chuckled. It would soon be dark. Simple, then, to get to the *Gray Goose* and take plenty of time in looking it over. In the meantime, there was nothing to prevent visiting the little taxidermist shop along the waterfront. He had seen it that afternoon. No doubt that was where Bowser was having his fish mounted.

The taxidermist was a little weazened old man with protruding rheumic eyes and a bald head. He came shuffling behind a glass case, rubbing his hands in anticipation.

"Anything in my line?" he asked, in a dry, colorless voice.

Brownell glanced around the little shop. The walls were covered with mounted flying fish, sea bass and albacores; a few blow fish, suspended on wires. "I'm wondering if you have any such thing as swordfish, or good sized tuna," said Brownell easily.

The taxidermist shook his head. It was evident that he was disappointed. "This is all I have," he said, pointing to the wall.

"All too small. I want either a big marlin or a good sized tuna." Brownell's glance shifted to the little workroom at the back. Through the partly opened door he saw a big swordfish on the work table. He took a step toward it. "Ah! That's what I want," he said, stepping into the workroom.

As if filled with resentment, the taxidermist had followed. He was visibly nervous. His long, emaciated fingers tapped the edge of the work table. "That —that isn't for sale." The old man was flushed now; his forehead dotted with perspiration. "That isn't for sale," he repeated, "and this is my workroom. It's—it's private."

The man's agitation amused Brownell. It could only mean one thing. It could only mean that he had something to conceal. He ran his hand over the swordfish, his strong fingers pressed hard. There was something bulky under his touch. Something hard and sharp—like the edge of a can. His expression of amusement suddenly changed to the combination of smiling lips and steady, obstinate eyes.

"So, you're mixed up in the game with Bowser," he said evenly.

The taxidermist went white. His lips trembled. His eyes grew wild and he leaned on the edge of the table for support. "What game? There must be some mistake. I—I don't understand," he quavered.

Brownell turned the swordfish over and quickly ripped open the under side. He pulled out some wads of excelsior, then a small tin can. "I don't suppose you understand what this is," he said holding the can before the old man's face, "nor why you put it in that fish."

The taxidermist sank into a chair. His lips moved, but no words came.

"I'm not going to ask you to explain to me," continued Brownell. "You will be given the chance to explain to the judge."

"You mean! You mean you're going to ar-rest me?" came the old man's voice shakily.

"Exactly."

There was a sudden wail. The old man had fallen to his knees and grasped Brownell's hand. "Please! Please let me tell you what I know. It's not much, but, please, please believe me."

Brownell looked down at the withering old man. There was something in those eyes, that voice, that rang true. He pointed to the chair and bade the old man to arise.

"I didn't know these cans were in the fish until today," began the taxidermist. "And I didn't put them there. They must have been put in last night after I had closed up. I don't know who put them there."

"Do you suspect anyone?" Brownell's voice was quiet, comforting.

"I do and I don't. It's all a puzzle to me and I can't quite make it out."

"Go on and tell me what made you suspicious," prompted Brownell.

"It's the way he wanted those fish mounted."

"Who?"

"Mr. Browser. He came to me two or three weeks ago and asked me if I would undertake to mount all the fish he caught or managed to buy for that purpose. He said he had a friend who could sell all the mounted fish he could collect on the island and that he wanted to make sure of uniform mounting.

"Well, I undertook to do his mounting, but when I did the first one for him and put it on a board, he insisted that I leave them off the boards until he was ready to have me.

"I told him it would do a better job if I did the whole thing at once, but he was insistent that I merely prepare the fish and put it ready for the board and hold it for further instructions.

"I did that, afterwards. And this morning when I came into the shop I found a note under the door telling me to have all the fish ready today because he expected to crate them tonight to ship. I left off everything else and began following his instructions when I noticed that the fish seemed heavy. Then I noticed that one of them was not tacked the way I usually do. I ripped off the tacks and began doing the job over when I discovered the cans. It was that fish that's on the table now.

"I was worried about it and wondered what it was. When I went home for breakfast, I told the wife about it and showed her one of the cans. She said it must be opium. I've been worried sick all day. Haven't been able to do a thing and I've been scared everytime anyone's been in the store for fear they knew those cans were here and they thought that I was mixed up in something crooked."

"What were you going to do with the fish?" slowly asked Brownell, sure that the taxidermist had spoken the truth.

"Tell Bowser to take it away and do his own mounting," flared the old man.

"Haven't you thought about notifying the authorities?"

"Yes," the taxidermist admitted sheepishly, "but I didn't want to do that until the fish was away from here. I figured that if I told the police after Bowser got the stuff away, there was less chance of making me trouble."

"Haven't you any idea who put the cans in the fish after you had closed the shop last night?"

The old man smiled for the first time. "I don't think it's anybody but Bowser himself, but I swear, I don't know how he got in." He lowered his voice. Someone entered the front door. The newcomer was Bowser.

Brownell tried to step away from the smuggler's range of vision, but he was too late. One quick glance had shown him that Bowser's facial muscles had contracted. It left no doubt in Brownell's mind that he had been seen and recognized, so he boldly followed the taxidermist into the store, took out his pipe and, slowly, deliberately, he filled it.

Bowser's glance swept past Brownell's shoulders, to the little workroom where the swordfish and the opium cans lay in full view. His face clouded and he slammed the street door shut and turned the lock.

"I'll fix you for meddling," he said belligerently to the old man. "Pull down those shades!"

The taxidermist glanced appealingly at Brownell and proceeded to obey.

"So, Mr. Dick Brownell is still in the service, eh? It's a pity I didn't finish you when I had a chance."

BOWSER'S right hand had slipped into his coat pocket and something sharp was pointing toward Brownell. The revenue service man knew it was a gun, and although he was unarmed himself, he smiled back at Bowser, deliberately struck a match and applied it to his pipe.

"Danged sure of yourself, eh?" came Bowser's voice. "You won't be when I get through with you." His hand whipped out of his pocket; a gun flashed in the light.

The taxidermist turned off the switch and threw himself on the floor back of the showcase. Brownell launched himself at Bowser, tripped and fell headlong. Bowser fired. Then came a crash in the street door, splintered glass over the floor and Bowser sprinted through the workroom, slammed the door shut.

Brownell darted after him, but the rear door was locked from the outside. He could hear Bowser running up the alley.

"Don't be a fool," boomed Crowley's voice. It was he who had flung himself through the street door unmindful of the plate glass.

"Guess you're right, Jack. I haven't got a gun. How did you manage to be here at the right time?"

"Been right back of him since he left the pier. Saw you inside and everything that went on before the shades were drawn. When I saw the lights go out, that was my cue. I knew if I smashed the door it would scare him off."

By this time Brownell had reached the electric switch near the door. He turned it on and the light revealed the taxidermist standing where Brownell had been, holding a gun in his hand.

"I was taking it to you when the crash came," he said. "I wasn't sure you had one." He came forward and gave the gun to Brownell.

Brownell quickly examined the gun, saw it contained six shells, motioned to Crowley and stepped into the workroom.

"It would be foolish to show ourselves in that alley," said Crowley. "He'll shoot the moment he sees us. Don't you think it would be better to block his escape off the island and lay low."

Brownell saw the logic in Crowley's question and turned for the store. He stopped as he reached the threshold. The captain of the *Gray Goose* was coming in from the street.

There was some significance in this, Brownell thought. First, Bowser had come to the store—undoubtedly to get his stuffed fish—and this boatman was coming in to help carry it to the *Gray Goose*. The taxidermist was innocent, but this bushy-browed boatman? How much did he figure in Bowser's schemes?

"Put up your hands!" commanded Brownell, watching for tell-tale expressions. "Step right this way, and keep them above your head."

It was evident that the boatman was frightened. His eyes grew wide and it seemed as if he would collapse.

"This is Bowser's accomplice," Brownell said to Crowley. "Put the cuffs on him."

"Bowser's accomplice," repeated the captain. "What do you mean?"

"Simply that we're on to your smuggling scheme, captain. We've got you with the goods."

"I don't get you." The man was pale, unsteady.

Brownell smiled. "You'll find that it isn't always easy to smuggle opium to the mainland, old man. That stuffed fish stunt was good, but it stopped working."

"You got me wrong," said the boatman, as if coming to a sudden realization. "I'm not mixed up in it and I'll tell you all I know. I came in to compare notes with Mr. Linder. Will you let me talk?"

"You can do that in court," coolly said Brownell.

"I'll talk now. As I said before, I came in to compare notes with Mr. Linder, the taxidermist. I got kind of suspicious today, over something that happened yesterday and last night.

"We were coming back from the fishing grounds, Mr. Bowser and I, and when we passed Sheepshead, I saw a boat anchored there and—"

"Where's Sheepshead?" interrupted Brownell.

"That's a big cliff on the other side of the island, not far from Seal Rocks."

"All right. You saw a boat anchored there, and what?"

"I saw a boat anchored there that don't belong in these waters. Bowser asked me to go close to it. I did. He spoke to the fellows on that boat for a few minutes. They talked Spanish and I couldn't understand. Afterwards, he said they were friends from San Francisco. Well, last night, I filled the gas tank on the *Gray Goose* so's we could start early this morning. Bowser had told me he wanted to get an early start today.

"This morning, I noticed that half the gas was gone and the cushions on the seats were wet. I didn't say anything. I thought maybe my boy had gone out for a ride with his girl on the *Goose*, so I filled the tank again.

"Today, Bowser asked me to come past Sheepshead again. He didn't ask me to stop this time, but we went close to that boat and when he thought I didn't see him, he made signals to that boat with his fingers."

"What kind of signals?"

"He held up both hands and spread his fingers apart. I figured what he was doing had something to do with ten. I thought that was funny, those queer signals when he thought I wasn't looking, so I paid strict attention to the name of that boat. It's called the *Ionic*, but that name was painted over another one that looked like *Spindrift*.

"Well, when I got home tonight, I asked the boy if he used the *Gray Goose* last night. He said he had not, and when I told him about that launch I saw yesterday and today, he said he was sure that was the boat that had been stolen out of San Pedro three weeks ago. He said he read in the paper about the *Spindrift* being stolen and the description he gave me tallies to a 'T'.

"That's all I know, and I was coming in to ask Mr. Linder if he had noticed anything queer about Bowser, and what we'd better do about it."

"Bowser must have gone after that opium last night himself and sneaked in here after everybody was gone to bed," supplied Linder.

"That's just my conclusion," said Brownell. Then turning again to the captain of the *Gray Goose*. "Can you take us to Sheepshead?"

"Sure could. When do you want to go?"

"Right now."

"Be ready as soon as I tell the wife and get some gas in the tank."

"Let's send word to your wife and get started right away. We want to get there before Bowser does."

The three men went to the pier. But it was too late. The *Gray Goose* was gone. At the point where it should have been anchored was the small row boat that was used to go to and from the pier.

Brownell did not waste time in asking questions of the men on the pier. Instead, he asked the captain the name of the fastest boat on the island.

"The *Catalina Flyer* is the fastest boat here, but we couldn't get her. She's used for searchlight trips at night."

"Humph! Searchlight! Couldn't want anything better," supplied Crowley.

A FEW minutes later arrangements had been concluded for the use of the *Catalina Flyer* and the three men were on their way to Sheepshead. Brownell gave instructions to leave the searchlight on and make it appear that the boat was on one of its regular excursions. These instructions were followed and while the *Catalina Flyer* sped toward Seal Rocks, the immense searchlight played on the water and the shore line. Thousands of flying fish, attracted by the light, sprang out of the water and planed above it for long distances, their long slender bodies shimmering like silver things above the blue water.

They finally reached Seal Rocks, the point farthest south on the island, and while the giant searchlight kept its beam on the rocks and the *Flyer* rounded the point, dozens of seals, blinded and frightened by the glare, barked and crawled into the water.

Finally, the *Flyer* had rounded the point. They were in rougher water now, on the unprotected side of the island, and while the speed of the excursion boat was retarded, the craft lived up to its reputation. Soon, the *Gray Goose* was picked up in the distance. Gradually, the *Flyer* crept on it. Then the *Ionic* was sighted.

The *Gray Goose* was seen to run alongside, then veer off to the right and turn in circles. It was evident that she had been abandoned.

"The *Goose'll* be smashed to pieces," came the cry from the captain. "She's all I've got."

"We'll pick her up in time, and tow her in," reassured Brownell.

The *Ionic* got under way and headed for the ocean, then turned sharply to the left, a ruse to make time while the *Catalina Flyer* changed its course.

Brownell ordered the engine reversed. The *Flyer* slowed down and the *Gray Goose* was taken in tow. This operation only took a few minutes, but the *Ionic* had taken advantage of those minutes. When the *Flyer's* searchlight scanned the water, the craft was nowhere in sight.

At a word from Brownell, the *Flyer's* engine was shut off. Then came the distant "put-put" of the other craft. They got its direction from the noise of the exhaust. Immediately, the *Flyer* resumed full speed, the chase was begun, and, soon, the *Ionic* was once again within the powerful beam of searchlight.

As the distance between the two boats was reduced, Bowser was seen gun in hand, teeth bared and gleaming. He was ready for a finish fight.

Then came his first shot. It spattered against the upper deck and Brownell realized that Bowser intended to shoot out the light. Then came a volley of shots that went wild. Two men joined Bowser in the stern of the *Ionic* and from the way she traveled from side to side, it was evident that there was no one at the wheel.

The boats were within a hundred yards of each other now, and Brownell saw that the two men with Bowser were Mexicans. He called to them to surrender.

For answer, a shot knocked off his hat.

"If you don't throw your guns in the water and hold up your hands," yelled Brownell, "we'll ram you."

There were no signs of surrender from the *Ionic*. While the two Mexicans fired less frequently and used Bowser for a shield, the wild shooting continued without seeming effect.

They were opposite the garbage dump now, just north of Seal Rocks. Crowley, who had been manning the searchlight gave a yell and the beam of light pierced the water, directly down. Schools of sharks were traveling with the *Flyer*.

For a moment, Brownell thought his friend had been wounded, but he heard the yell again and he knew that if he had been wounded, there was nothing serious.

"Look at 'em, Dick! Sharks! Hundreds of 'em!"

Brownell glanced into the water, then at the faces of the Mexicans. It was the psychological moment. "Put up your hands or you'll feed the sharks!" he commanded.

The Mexicans were looking fixedly at the sharks, fear gripping their hearts. Their hands went up.

Brownell heard something cutting the air above his head. He looked up. It was Crowley swinging a rope. It suddenly darted and the next moment the two Mexicans had been roped. Their agonized cries rent the air.

The *Flyer* struck the *Ionic*. The impact sent the Mexicans from their feet, tumbling over the rail into the water. Bowser had sprung at the *Flyer* and caught the railing. In a moment, he had clambered over it and was backing toward the stern—away from Brownell.

The captain switched on the deck lights, shut off the engine and came hurrying toward Brownell.

"Help Jack," he commanded. "Up above. Help him pull up the Mexicans."

Brownell had done little firing. He wanted to get Bowser without hurting him if he could, but Bowser had drawn blood now. Brownell felt a stinging pain in the left shoulder. That characteristic smile of his came to his lips, his eyes, cold, steady.

Bowser had found refuge back of a pile of life preservers. Occasionally his head bobbed up, then his hand, holding the automatic, appeared above the life preservers. Brownell fired.

Bowser's hand flew up, the gun went overboard, and when Brownell saw that hand again, it lay on the deck, at the end of that stack of life preservers, bleeding.

He slowly tucked the gun in his belt, took out his pipe, deliberately filled it and applied a match. "I guess your smuggling days are over, Bowser," he said coolly. "When we get through with you—Texas will still be wanting you. Last I heard, they were anxious to spend thirty thousand to get you back. Nifty little reward, Bowser. Nifty little reward."

Bowser sprang to his feet. In a second he was climbing the rail. The searchlight was pointed into the water, dozens of sharks, long, clammy, sinister-looking, threading water, as if waiting. Bowser hesitated. He reeled back and fell to the deck. The smuggler had fainted.

THE SOUL MARK

By H. C. WIRE

FROM start to finish the whole thing was almost unbelievable. In the first place it seemed ridiculous that Harvey Grayham should go to San Marco if he expected to rest his nerves.

Grayham was a wreck; he admitted it. In spite of the fact that he was only middle aged, possessed a fine six-foot physique, a keen untroubled face and no more than the usual amount of life's worries, he was afraid.

He was afraid of everything; afraid of his business, which naturally suffered; afraid of himself. As he often said, "If I were younger I'd be afraid to go home in the dark." And when a man begins to call himself a coward, he is in a bad way.

So the lonely beach town of San Marco, with a bar-bound harbor that attracted only the scum of the sea's ships and men, was not exactly the environment Grayham needed.

But he liked the rocky coast-line, with its hills rising straight from the water's edge, and he thought he might come across some interesting scenes for his painting, a neglected hobby. Consequently, he rented a ramshackle house which stood on an isolated promontory some distance from the village, and settled there hoping to rest.

He was alone save for his old housekeeper, Marge; a woman with thin gray hair, three front teeth, and frequent hallucinations.

In the second place Grayham's adventurous friend, Doctor Jack Holt should not have chosen that time to return from an eventful crusade among the savages of the Raphael Islands. Not that Jack himself was to be considered harmful; on the contrary, the bond of friendship between the two men had steadily tightened ever since its beginning in college days, and Jack's deep concern for Grayham should have made his visit seem desirable—had it not been for something he brought with him from the Islands.

He came into San Marco harbor on a rusty, stumpy-looking tramp steamer, and hunted up Grayham soon after his arrival. At that time Grayham had been in the beach town for about a month, growing more timid with each day of his restless inactivity.

It was on Sunday that Jack went out to the isolated house of his friend, taking with him a collection of thrilling tales, some photographs—and this present for Grayham. The thing looked harmless enough; simply a small pouch made of black leather, peculiarly marked by a cross within a circle. But it had a gruesome history.

Jack was somewhat younger than Grayham, slighter of build, with a dark well-set face that was usually alight with a happy, carefree smile. That smile was the first thing Grayham missed, then he noticed that a strained, haunted look had come into his friend's face, and he wondered. Somehow, when he saw this evident weakness in the other man, he was glad that his own reason for coming to San Marco was apparently unknown to Jack.

They spent a day or two renewing their old friendship, exchanging experiences of the years past; Jack doing most of the talking. It was not until in the evening of the third day that he brought out the leather pouch.

"I'm going to make you a present of this," he said, "but perhaps you won't want the thing after you've heard its story."

"I'll take the chance," replied Grayham, laughing.

"Wait." There was a seriousness in Jack's expression, and a warning tension in his voice that cut short Grayham's merriment.

"This black leather," Jack continued, "is human hide, from the chest of a native. And this design is a brand, burned into the flesh. It is supposed to have some great supernatural power—a mystery no white man has learned—and all tribesmen branded with it are bound to each other forever, even after death.

"When the body dies the soul is believed to live on within the limits of that mark—as far as I can make out that cross and circle *is* the soul. It is always cut from a dead body and preserved.

"Don't ask me to explain. I don't understand it. All I can tell you is how I got the pouch and what its effect has been on me. Laugh if you want to—I'm not crazy.

"Strange, isn't it, how some things simply get you? One would think that I have been through enough wild dangers to harden me to anything. And I am—to anything I can see or feel. But when there is only a noise and a smell, that's different."

THEY were sitting before a fireplace in which a log burned with a dull red glow, casting its color upon their faces, sending grotesque shadows of their bodies to dance upon the wall behind them. The only other light came from two candles placed upon a table near the opposite end of the room.

Grayham moved a little closer to the fire. The evenings always chilled him.

"I wrote to you, didn't I," Jack continued, "just before I started from Miamoa to cross one of the islands afoot? Old 'Chew Back' was my guide. I called him that because his one desire was for chewing tobacco, 'chew 'bac' he called it, and he would do anything for a plug of the stuff.

"He was not one of the branded natives, in fact he was from an enemy tribe. But he knew all parts of the island, and for two plugs of tobacco a day he consented to lead me across it.

"For three days we had nothing more exciting than swarms of bugs, sweltering heat and a devil of a job cutting our way through a jungle canyon. I began to believe that people back in the States were right, when they had told me there were no real savages left on the Raphael Islands.

"Then one evening when we were almost across, the thunder of the surf not far away, something went whispering past my head and I saw the shaft of a spear slither into the brush.

"I ducked for cover. Chew was already behind a tree, opening up with a forty-five automatic on a bunch of natives that had slipped along the trail behind us. Civilization had certainly taught that brown man how to use a gun! By the time I was ready for action he had cleared the trail. One poor devil lay dead on the ground. His tribesmen tried to carry the body as they fled away, but they dropped it and ran as if the devil himself was after them when Chew jumped from behind the tree and started in again with his automatic.

"He stopped beside the body of the dead man, which was lying face down.

I came up just as he rolled the thing over, and that's when I first saw this brand—The Soul Mark. I asked what it was but Chew wouldn't tell me much about it. He seemed to have reverted for the moment from his half-civilized state, for he was going through some sort of rite over that enemy's body; talking, waving his hands—gave me a queer sort of feeling.

"At last he took out a sheath knife and began to strip away the hide where it was marked. When the job was finished he made a little roll of the piece of flesh and we started on.

"We reached a coast settlement that night, where we stayed until morning, then got a boat to take us back around the island to Miamoa.

"Altogether the trip had been a tame one, except for this business of The Soul Mark. I thought about that thing several times. At Miamoa, which is nothing but a dirty native trading port, I was to wait ten days until a tramp trader came along to pick me up.

"Chew went on to his own village a few miles inland. I didn't see him again until the day before I left the island. In the meantime I had learned more about this brand and was curious to know what Chew had done with his piece of hide. So I called on him.

"As usual, his greeting was, 'Got chew 'bac'?' The first thing I noticed was the branded hide, which he had cured and made into this pouch, hanging by a cord from his belt. I noticed something else, too.

"Along his neck, just below the left ear, was a long welt, like a swollen bruise. I asked Chew how he got it.

"'He come back,' was his explanation.

"'Who?'

"'He,' pointing to the pouch. 'He come for self.'

"And that was all I could get out of Chew. According to what I understood, that dead savage had come back for his 'self' or soul, and Chew had fought him off. Of course, I didn't believe the old liar, and yet I was more interested than ever in the pouch, and I wanted it.

"Chew wasn't anxious to sell it. But his tobacco was almost gone, so I traded him six plugs for the pouch, put the thing in my pocket and went back to Miamoa, thinking I had an interesting trophy to take home. Lord!"

Jack sat for a moment gazing into the dying fire. He seemed to be lost in his thoughts. He had talked as if no one were listening; as if he had been going over this past experience step by step, trying to find a reason in what had happened.

Grayham studied him thoughfully. It was not like Jack Holt to let fear of any sort enter his mind, and yet—the sudden realization sent a tingle of excitement over Grayham—he was afraid!

Certainly there must be something—Grayham rose to throw more wood on the fire.

The candles near the opposite end of the room flickered. One of them went out. Jack turned suddenly, gripping Grayham's arm.

"Harv!" he whispered. "Did you open that window?"

Grayham looked. One of the windows was slightly raised.

"Yes," he answered. "Do you want it closed?"

His voice betrayed none of the feeling within him. He had not opened that window. He felt his own nerves tighten as he crossed the room, closed the window and locked it.

RETURNING to the fireside he attempted vainly to force away the cold tingling that was creeping over his body. No doubt Marge had left the window open, he told himself, as she cleaned the house.

"You've been going too hard these last few years, Jack," he said, dropping again into his chair. "You're all on edge. Here, have a smoke. Never mind the rest of the story; it seems to upset you."

Grayham was not thinking entirely of his friend as he made this last suggestion.

Jack looked up, smiling, refusing the offer of a cigar. "Might as well tell it all to you—I'll think about it anyway. And I'm not so greatly upset. I don't believe in the idea of a body running around hunting for its soul, that Chew maintained. There is something more than that, but just what—"

He turned the piece of leather over and over in his hand as he continued his story. "A trader touched at Miamoa the next day and I got ready to leave.

"I went down to the market intending to get some trinkets to bring home. I found something, don't remember what, and drew out this pouch, which I was using as a money bag. When the old beggar who had sold me the things saw this he grabbed his stuff and backed away, muttering and waving his hands. He wasn't looking at me, but behind me.

"At first I laughed, then I felt queer, for I was aware of a peculiar rancid odor that seemed to be coming from this leather. But it wasn't, because I smelled of the thing. And the next moment the odor was gone.

"The market-place was crowded and that smell could have come from any of the dirty half-naked natives there, yet as I pushed my way through them I didn't get so much as a whiff of that peculiar odor.

"At the time I wasn't bothered about that part of it, but I did wonder what had struck the old peddler who had backed wild-eyed away from me. No doubt he had seen the marked pouch and had some superstitious fear of it, although he was not of the branded tribe.

"I decided not to display the pouch again while in Miamoa, so I emptied the money out of it and packed it in a bag that was being sent to the ship.

"That afternoon I went aboard and was bunked forward near the captain's cabin, in a room that had probably been for a steward in the ship's better days.

"It was devilish hot, so I stripped to my trousers and stretched out on the bunk listening to the rattle of loading; the clank of winches, mates bawling orders to the ship's crew. I must have dozed because evening came before I knew it. The long blast of the whistle that meant 'clearway' woke me up. It was not yet dark enough for me to need a light—just a murky gray over the water.

"There was a scurry of men running along the deck. We were making ready to cast off. I rolled from the bunk, then picked up my bag and put it on a chair, intending to get some clean clothes. When I opened the thing, there on top of my stuff was the pouch, just where I had packed it.

"The incident of that afternoon was pretty well out of my mind right then. I tossed the pouch to the top of the table and thought nothing of it.

"Harv, you're going to think I'm crazy—I can't help it." Jack's voice had dropped to a whisper. "That pouch hadn't been there more than a minute when I smelled the same rancid odor; it seemed to be filling the cabin, coming from nowhere. I tried to find a lamp. My match went out.

"Then I saw the face. It was the face of the dead man, right above the pouch, staring at me as if from the other side of that solid steel bulkhead! God! I jumped back, stumbled through the door and went sprawling on the deck.

"That jolted some sense into my head. I crept back to the cabin, looked in. There was nothing, not even the odor. The light of a match showed the pouch

still lying on the table. There was no one on that part of the deck near me.

"I just can't explain it, Harv. The next morning I saw that there was a mirror in the wall about where I had seen the face. And yet that didn't explain anything. I couldn't have seen the reflection of a man's face, because there was no one around.

"My first thought was to throw the damned pouch overboard, but it would have seemed like drowning a man. Honestly, that's the way I felt. So I packed it in the bottom of my trunk and left it there.

"During the rest of my trip nothing actually happened. But I had the feeling—can't explain it—that I was not alone in my cabin. I would wake up at night, half-conscious of that odor—you know how it is—the next morning I couldn't tell whether I had smelled it or dreamed it. I was mighty glad when we finally got here—although I'm not relieved. I still have that watched feeling, but I will not give in to it."

Jack stopped, gazed at the fire and sat for many minutes without speaking. "Well, do you want it?" he finally asked, holding out the pouch.

Grayham shrugged. "Yes, I'll take it." His acceptance was not enthusiastic. He took the pouch and gingerly studied the marking.

Jack leaned back in his chair, one hand pressed against his forehead.

For some minutes neither man spoke. The house seemed very quiet. A night breeze blew from off the sea. A door rattled. Grayham started at a sudden movement of his companion. Jack was sitting rigid in his chair, his hands gripping the seat, his head thrown back. He was taking short quick breaths, as if testing the air.

Almost unconsciously Grayham too sniffed, then leaped up, crying, "Cut it out! Man, you're hypnotizing me!"

Instantly he saw his mistake. To Jack this was an admission that Grayham had also caught the odor. He cringed deeper into his chair, his nerve seemed completely shattered.

Grayham tried to laugh, but even with the intake of his breath he drew in the full force of a suffocating rancid odor that was filling the room. His laugh was a weak gasp. He dropped the pouch to the floor, where it lay red in the glow of the dying fire.

THEN, breaking a moment of deathly quiet, there came a scream from the room at the rear of the house where Marge, the housekeeper slept. Just one piercing cry, cut short, then silence.

Grayham leaped toward the mantel over the fireplace, clutching a revolver that lay there, and crossed to the doorway at the side of the room.

"Stay here," he ordered Jack, then opening the door, he slipped into the darkened corridor leading to the back of the house.

At the far end of the passageway he could see a thread of light coming from beneath the door of Marge's room. As he crept ahead he was aware that the odor was growing stronger.

Stopping at the door, one hand reaching for the knob, he listened. There was no sound within. He flung the door open, at the same time flattening himself against the passage wall. But nothing happened; nothing rushed out upon him, none of the many terrible things he had imagined as he had approached came out of that room to clutch him, or strangle him, or attack him as he thought unseen devils might.

Neither did he see Marge. He peered into the room. It was reeking with the rancid smell. Then he saw the woman, cowering in one corner, her eyes wide with fright, her mouth moving convulsively.

He crossed to her, and she shrank away, covering her face with her hands. Then recognizing him she pointed to the other side of the room.

Grayham turned and saw nothing but an open door leading into the darkened kitchen. Before he could again face Marge to ask her what she had seen, he heard a noise in the front room, like the thump of an overturned chair. Then Jack's voice, a terrified cry, suddenly muffled.

Marge started to scream. Grayham silenced her with his hand.

"Stay here—don't move," he whispered. He blew out the lamp, crossed to the hallway and started back to the front room.

His legs were weak; he was trembling. He wanted to run out of the house, away from that odor, away from—the thought of Jack in there, sent him on along the hallway toward the closed door.

Blindly, pushed by a courage he had never realized was in him, he threw the door open, leveled the gun in his hand, and stepped into the room.

There he stopped, straining his eyes in the darkness, listening for a telltale sound. Both candles were out, the fire had died to a few scattered embers. For a moment he stood motionless, and vaguely he realized that he was no longer trembling, he felt calm, his grip on the revolver was steady.

Even as he expected at any instant to be fighting for his life, he marveled at the strength of will that held him there, waiting, unafraid.

These thoughts had taken but a fleeting moment, then in the dim light of the fire Grayham saw the form of Jack lying face down upon the hearth. He realized at the same time that the odor had almost vanished from the room; and the presence of danger seemed to have vanished with it.

He struck a match, held it high, holding the revolver in front of him. The room was empty, save for the figure in front of the fireplace.

Lighting a candle Grayham knelt by the side of his friend. A hurried examination showed that Jack was not dead, apparently he had fallen from his chair in a swoon.

Fainted in fright? Grayham forced the thought from his mind. Jack was no coward, and yet perhaps his nerves were pretty well gone. Grayham thought of his own trembling and faintness that had come upon him before he had re-entered the room. But he had forced it back—and he was supposed to be a nervous wreck!

Thus was he thinking as he worked over Jack, bringing him again to consciousness. And he was filled with a new joy in the realization that he had not given in to fear.

Soon Jack opened his eyes and sat up, staring about. He groped on the floor beside him, searching for a moment, then he said, almost like a sigh, "Thank God!"

Grayham looked, remembering that he had dropped the pouch to the floor at the first scream from Marge. The Soul Mark was gone.

He helped Jack to a chair, gave him a drink then whispered, "What happened, where is—"

"I can't tell you." Jack's nervous tension seemed to relax. "I can't tell you," he repeated. "I'm glad that damned thing's gone."

"You think there will be no more trouble?" Grayham asked doubtfully.

"I know it."

Grayham wondered at the confidence of this reply, and at the apparent relief that had come over Jack. Yet he too felt this relief, and although unable to understand what had happened, he believed that their danger had vanished with the pouch.

Leaving Jack for a moment he went to the back room where he had left Marge. She was sitting in a chair and looked up wonderingly as he lighted her

lamp. When he plied her with questions she could not tell what she had seen; whether she had been dreaming or in the grip of one of her frequent hallucinations.

She said something about an odor. Grayham convinced her that she had been dreaming. Then he returned to the front room.

Jack's prediction that they would have no more trouble proved to be correct. He stayed with Grayham for a week, that passed uneventfully, and his interrupted visit was a pleasant one after all.

When he announced his intention of "moving on" Grayham said he too was going back to the city, and his business.

"What, already?" Jack exclaimed. "I thought you had planned to stay here for some time."

"I am anxious to get back to work," Grayham replied.

It would be hard to say whether he left San Marco because he was anxious to get back to his business, or to his club where he could tell the tale of The Soul Mark. At any rate, for several weeks he was often the center of an interested group.

The most impressive part of Grayham's story was always at the point when he told about that moment in the hallway, just before he returned to the front room from which had come Jack's muffled cry.

"Boys," he would say to his circle of spellbound listeners, "I tell you a man doesn't know how much nerve he has got until he gets in a place where he's forced to use it!"

Which was exactly the thing Doctor Jack Holt had believed when he had planned his visit with Grayham in San Marco. As he wrote, in reporting the interesting case to his medical society—"My friend was in a condition common to many men who get into the eat-sleep-work rut. He was giving himself no time to get out and fight; not even the battle of a two mile walk on a wintry day. From sheer lack of using his nerve he thought he had lost it.

"My treatment was unusual, as it was simple—a flask of foul-smelling oil, a thrilling tale and a bit of stage acting—but it was effective."

Wonderful Providence

THE following singular account is related by Thuanus in his History of the civil wars of France. When the Catholics besieged Rouen, in the year 1562 (a period of time rendered remarkable on account of the civil wars which originated from religious disputes), Francis Civile, a gentleman of the Calvinist party received a wound, which made him fall senseless from the ramparts into the town. Some soldiers, who believed him dead, stripped and buried him with the negligence usual on such occasions, An affectionate servant whom he had retained in his service, desirous of giving his master a more honorable burial, went with a design to find his remains. His search being fruitless among so many dead bodies, he covered them again with earth, but so that the hand of one of them remained uncovered. As he was retiring, he happened to look behind him, and perceived the hand, and fearing that object might incite the dogs to unearth the body to devour it, he returned in order to cover it, when the light of the moon just emerging from a cloud discovered to him a diamond ring on the finger, which he knew to be Civile's. Without delay he took up his master, who had just breath in him, and carried him to the hospital of the wounded; but the surgeons being fatigued with labor, and considering him as on the point of death, took no trouble about his wounds. The servant found himself obliged to take him to his own house, where he laid for four days without any help. At the end of that time two physicians visited him, and by their care and attention he was placed in a fair way of recovery. The town having been taken by assault, the conquerors had the barbarity to throw him out of the window. He fortunately fell on a heap of dung, where, abandoned by every one, he lay three days in the most miserable condition. Du Croiset, his relation, had him carried off in the middle of the night, and sent to a house in the country, where his wounds were dressed and he completely recovered. Civile lived forty yars after this event in perfect health.

This particular Providence which had saved this man from so many perils had also presided over his birth. His mother dying with child in the absence of his father, had been buried without anyone thinking of extracting the infant by the Caesarian operation. The day after she was interred, the husband arrived, and learned with the greatest surprise and sorrow, the death of his wife, and the little attention that had been paid to the fruit of her womb. He had her immediately dug up, opened and extracted Civile still living.

Monsieur Rouelle

THIS celebrated chemist was extremely absent at his lectures; he usually brought with him a brother and a nephew to assist him in his experiments; but as his assistants were not always there, he would cry: "Nephew! why, nephew!" but the nephew not coming, he would go himself to the laboratory, always continuing his lecture as if he still had been with his auditors, and at his return had commonly finished the demonstration he was then about.

One day, in the absence of his brother and nephew, being left to perform the experiments himself, he said, "Gentlemen, you see this cauldron upon this brazier; well, if I was to cease stirring a single moment an explosion would ensue, which would blow us all into the air!" This was no sooner said than he forgot to stir, and his prediction was accomplished; the explosion taking place with a most horrible crash. All the windows in the laboratory were smashed to pieces, and two hundred auditors whirled away into the garden!

IT!

By E. M. SAMSON

IT BEGAN in France.

I was, at the time, leaning over the operating table upon which lay an unconscious officer, not seriously wounded, but needing immediate attention: And the guard standing stiffly by the door indicated he was a prisoner of much more than ordinary importance. Indeed, it was no secret to those of us in the room that the brain hidden within that closely cropped skull was responsible for more allied reverses than the combined brains of the entire General Staff, and, if given the smallest of opportunities, he would slip through our fingers and vanish.

Behind me stood Major Selwyn Morris, of the Intelligence Department, and it was he who leaned forward and whispered:

"All is fair in love and war, Horace! Now is your chance to test your theory and rid us of a dangerous foe!"

For an instant I stared incredulously at the speaker, then turned with a shudder of repugnance to complete the work before me. An expression of disgust clouded the major's face, and regret flickered in his gray eyes as he followed the patient from the room.

"A wonderful chance!" he murmured. "And you lost your nerve, Horace!"

At that instant was sown the first seed of discord in a friendship of years' standing, intimacy as seldom ever exists even between brothers!

I, Horace Tremaine, and Selwyn Morris had gone through college together, inseparable companions, sharing reverses as well as joys, and when I took up the study of medicine, he began law. Nor did graduation separate us or bring about any change in our relations; for we took an apartment in the city and shared quarters as before.

As an attorney-at-law Selwyn was mediocre, but I at once leaped to the front in my chosen profession. Endowed by nature with the keen brain, uncanny judgment, and long, supple fingers—the surgeon's hand, a very few years sufficed to establish me as one of the country's leading operators. With an insatiable passion for research and plenty of money, I set up a laboratory in our apartment, far removed from any possibility of disturbance, and there performed the work which soon made me the leading authority on brain surgery.

As for Selwyn, he could not have been more delighted and enthusiastic had the success been his own; and, sharing as he did my entire confidence, knowing my hopes and my dreams, he was aware of my wonderful discovery—the exact location in the brain of a center which I named temporarily the "Memory center." It was a complex ganglion, and I confidently believed that, with the living human brain to work upon, I could isolate the component centers, thus making possible by operation the complete extirpation of all criminal tendencies!

That was my hope, the ambition which spurred me on!

Upon one occasion only did I have the opportunity to try the experiment, and though it did not result exactly as I anticipated, it proved my theory to be correct without a shadow of a doubt. One night, while tramping the lower city as had been our habit, we caught a murderer red-handed. Like a flash, the same idea came to both of us, and we saved him from the law by smuggling him into our apartment where, believing the end justified the means, we compelled the frightened wretch to submit to the operation.

Without a trace of egotism I say that operation was a beautiful and delicate piece of work; but instead of removing the criminal tendency, it served to locate what I called the "center of personal recollection." That man, though he retained all the intelligence he ever possessed, lost every shred of personal remembrance! Every thought, every incident which would serve to identify him was gone! And what was most remarkable, *he did not know he had forgotten anything!* To continue the experiment, I placed him in a state of partial anesthesia, then related a fictitious personal history, complete in details—all of which he later repeated as fact and *believed it himself!*

IT WAS shortly after this the war came, and both Selwyn and I went over—he, in the Intelligence Department, and I, in the medical.

In charge of my own hospital I gave proof of my aptitude by taking up reconstructive surgery and producing results so miraculous that surgeons of all nations came to study my methods. Today, many men with "Tremaine faces" are passed on the streets without attracting a second glance because of disfigurement.

Then came the suggestion that I debase both myself and my profession by robbing a fellow being of more than his life—his family, position, home, his entity! It mattered not that he was an enemy who would not hesitate to take my life should we meet in the open—that he might escape and do incalculable harm to our cause—such an action was unthinkable! And Selwyn Morris not only counseled it, but attempted to justify it with the old—"All is fair in love and war"! It revealed a moral depravity, a perversion of soul hitherto concealed from me, which nauseated and made me wonder at our long friendship.

Fortunately my work kept me so busy I saw little of him, for with each day my aversion increased, and though I tried to conceal it because of our years of intimacy, it was growing beyond my control.

It was also in France that I met Margaret Thomas.

Having baffled the plans of many ambitious and designing mothers, I had come to consider myself immune, and fully expected to end my days a bachelor; but such was the lure of her beauty and attractiveness, I surrendered without a struggle. Though I had not declared myself, I felt that she understood and returned my love; and I dreamed of the day when, the war ended, I could take her back home as my wife. Then without warning, my dream was shattered! I encountered her with Selwyn Morris, and was informed of the ceremony that had just been performed! The world suddenly went black, I staggered, and out of the darkness I heard him murmur:

"Buck up, Horace! All is fair in love and war!"

Within twenty-four hours I had asked for and obtained the transfer which caused so much surprise and comment—for I was afraid I would kill him if I remained near him.

Arriving home, I threw myself heart and soul into the work of reconstruction—the building up of features destroyed, which made me world famous. But what cared I for notoriety or honors! With a strength and concentration of effort almost beyond my own understanding, the wonderment of my colleagues, I worked feverishly with little or no rest—I did the work of a dozen men—and little did they suspect I was working to save my reason!

My life was a hell! Ugly black thoughts constantly tortured my brain when I was idle, and my sleep of exhaustion was a succession of frightful nightmares, in which the tormenting demon invariably took the likeness of Selwyn Morris! I had to work, work or succumb!

Upon several occasions, distorted vision showed him to me in the street crowds; and once I followed for hours to locate his abode—only to learn upon cautious inquiry that he was still in France. At another time, the face upon which I was working suddenly became his face, and for the first time in my life my nerve almost deserted me—I finished by will power alone.

I knew these were delusions, fantasies of a mentality strained almost to the breaking point, and I feared the time when I should have to face him—the outcome made me shudder, even though my heart was filled with hatred.

With the end of the war came news of Selwyn's return, and from that hour I dared not trust myself on the public streets. I motored from my apartment to the hospital, there to remain until evening; then, behind drawn curtains, I rode home and shut myself up until midnight. At that hour, when there was no likelihood of meeting him, I walked for one hour in a place he had never been known to frequent—the park. As time passed, I gradually lost my fear—I felt it would be possible to avoid him forever—then, upon a secluded path, in the pale, ghostly moonlight, I met him.

Facing each other, separated only by a few feet, he smiled and extended his hand. I was astounded to find my mind clear and my nerves quiet—that I experienced none of the feelings I had anticipated.

"Horace, old man," he said with deep feeling, "I heard that you took your exercise here every night, and I have come to ask your forgiveness."

"For what?" I asked calmly.

"For—for—" he faltered, then exclaimed: "Truly, old man, I knew nothing of your interest in Margaret until I had asked her to marry me! Do you believe me?"

"Of course I do, Wyn!" I cried, clasping his hand warmly. "I'll admit I was pretty hard hit at first. But she never told me she cared for me, so there was nothing in the way of her accepting you. I've buried it, Wyn, and I wish both of you every happiness!"

"Gad, Horace! That's the best news I've ever heard!" he exclaimed joyously. "We were dreadfully cut up about you, and now you have removed the only drawback to our complete happiness! How glad she will be! She's an angel, Horace, if there ever was one on earth!"

For a moment emotion choked me, and I was thankful the shadow of the shrubbery hid the shudder which convulsed me.

"I know she is, old fellow," I managed to say a trifle hoarsely. "But come, you are going home with me—I've a little old Scotch left, and I haven't forgotten how you like it!"

THOUGH he protested at the lateness of the hour, I led him away to the apartment we had for several years shared in common.

As I saw him seated in the chair which had once been his favorite, a great wave of joy surged over me, and I turned hastily to prepare his drink, lest he notice my agitation. As I added the white crystals which were to place him entirely in my power, my hand shook; but I steeled myself, and when I faced him, there was no outward sign of the fierce fires burning within me.

"To *her*, Wyn!" I cried, raising my glass. "May she live long to enjoy her happiness!"

We drank, and I seated myself, my eyes fixed gloatingly upon him. He was mine—mine! My heart sang it—the little clock on the mantel ticked it. Mine—mine! Mine—mine! Mine—mine! No power of heaven or hell could tear him from me!

"—like old times!" I heard him murmur drowsily, attempting to arise. "Wish I could stay, old chap—pretty—late. Retta will wonder—I—I—feel little queer—better go—come back—come—come—"

His voice died away like a clock running down, and he sank back in the chair.

"At last—at last!" I grated, looking down at him. "You and I are going to have a long delayed settlement, Selwyn Morris!"

Stripping off my coat, I took the limp form in my arms as though he was a child and half ran through the rooms to the distant laboratory. My plans had long been worked out to the smallest detail, so there was no hesitation now. Hastily removing his clothing, I strapped him to the table and made my preparations with the sureness and care I would have observed in the hospital.

Little anesthetic was necessary, and I was soon at work. A few well-placed sutures gave his eyes a slight oriental slant; one here, one there, and his curved eyebrows were almost straight; an incision and a little careful moulding made the nose decidedly aquiline; a small portion of cuticle removed, and a running stitch gave a cleft to the chin; two stitches in just the right place made the ears stand from the head; and, then, my crowning feat!

After long experiment upon the lower animals, I had succeeded in injecting, by means of a specially made hair-like hypodermic needle, pigment into the retina, thereby changing the color of the eye! This I now did on my first human patient, and rejoiced when the gray changed to seal brown!

Deftly applying adhesive dressing, I placed him in bed and threw myself into a chair by his side, where I remained the rest of the night and the succeeding day, holding him every minute under the influence of the benumbing drug. The moment I had prayed for, planned and waited patiently for had come at last! I reveled in a delirium of ecstasy, without any sense of drowsiness or fatigue! At times I could scarcely believe, and many times reached out to touch the plaster-strapped face, to convince myself it was not a dream!

For three days I kept him unconscious, snatching sleep in the chair by the bedside; and every one of those days I laughed at the uproar I knew his disappearance must be causing! I could imagine the theories of the police—foul play, suicide, accident! And all the time he was snoring away in his old bed! Is it any wonder I laughed! I would laugh still more when I had finished with him and turned him out into the world! This would be my masterpiece, and what a pity no one would ever know!

On the fourth day, I removed the dressing and strapped him once more to the table; then I allowed his consciousness to return—for I would not deprive him of his personality without giving him some of the hideous mental torture he had caused me. To see his fear, terror, and despair! To hear him rave! Oh, that would be music to my ears!

At last, his eyes opened, and he looked wonderingly around; then he saw me and stared. A flicker of recollection came into those strange brown eyes, and he gasped hoarsely:

"What has happened, Horace? Why am I here?" at that moment, he discovered the straps, and shrank before the wild gleam in my eyes. "Horace!" he cried, horror in his tone. "Horace, you—you—"

He paused as I silently held a mirror before him. For a moment, he stared in bewilderment at the face reflected, every feature of which was strange to him; then the terrible realization stunned him—he understood my revenge!

"You fiend—you fiend from hell!" he mouthed through hard, dry lips.

Oh, the unspeakable joy of that moment! I was repaid for all my suffering! If he was horrified now, how would he feel when he knew the rest? I must tell him!

"Just a small payment on the debt I owe you, Wyn, dear boy!" I laughed uncontrollably. "You snatched me from heaven to cast me into hell, so why shouldn't I be a fiend?" Then my laughter ceased, and I glared with hate. "I loved you as a brother, yet you tore out my heart and trampled upon it! You sent me to hell—you made me a fiend—you suggested that I use for my own ends the discovery I hoped would make the world better, and now, by God, you will be the first to undergo it! Do you hear?" I shrieked, and he seemed to shrink within himself. "Do you hear? I am going to relieve you of your personality!"

The result of my announcement far exceeded my fondest hopes! With the scream of a madman, he wrenched and tore at the straps which bound him; then, finding this fruitless, he raved and cursed—all of which I thoroughly enjoyed until I realized he was about to escape me! The light of insanity gleamed in his eyes—the bloody froth which flecked his lips warned me his reason was going!

With the anesthetic crushed to his face, I watched his struggles grow less wild and finally cease. Five minutes later, I had him prepared, and in half an hour, he was back in the bed. In the meantime, I had dissected out the center which I knew, from my operation on the criminal, to be the one which controlled personal recollection.

IT WAS done! My revenge was complete and beyond recall! No other living man knew of the existence of my ganglion, and, even I, if I ever so wished, could not replace that which I had removed! It was gone forever—removed by an operation which I, alone of all men, could perform!

With my lust for revenge satiated, I sat beside him to await returning consciousness; and when it came, I repeated in his ear a personal history—that his would not be a blank. I chuckled at its plausibility, for it was that of a man—not unlike him in build—who had told me his story in France, then—died. With what I told him, Selwyn Morris could take up the life of Anthony Jones, and the substitution never be suspected.

I had no doubt as to the result—it could not fail, yet I was overjoyed when, in answer to my question later in the day, he repeated the words I had impressed upon his semi-conscious brain, and asked if I would help him to find employment! Imagine my satisfaction when he accepted my offer and became my man-servant!

* * *

Two weeks have elapsed since the operation, and gradually I am reaching the conviction that it was not a complete success—that I removed something more than personal recollection. As Anthony Jones, he appears perfectly normal, yet I feel there is something—*something* lacking. There is no life, no fire in his eye—it is dull and expressionless. He takes no interest in anything, is stolid, devoid of emotion, and mechanical (that expresses it exactly) in all his actions. He obeys orders to the letter, and has given no cause for the uneasiness I feel; yet he is getting on my nerves—so much so, I am beginning to fear him! Why? I do not know.

* * *

HORRIBLE! Inconceivable!

A few minutes ago, Betsy, my little fox terrier, angered by a kick from—Jones, snapped at his leg. Then followed a scene so brutal, so disgustingly fiendish that my soul revolted, and I crouched in terror behind my chair! With a quick grab, Jones seized the little animal and deliberately twisted the head from the body! Nauseated as I was by the sight, I saw something which made me shudder with loathing for *myself* and my crime!

As he stood there, the dripping carcass in his hands, I saw there was no anger—no resentment—no excitement—*there was absolutely no expression whatsoever in his eyes!*

Then I *knew!* And the knowledge almost crazed me! Like Frankenstein, I had created a monster who would destroy me with as little compunction as he had taken the life of the helpless little animal!

God forgive me! No man ever sinned as I! I had robbed him of that something men call a *soul!*

To my half crazed brain, he appeared in his true light, as he was—a man—no, not a man—a *Thing* without a soul! A hideous monstrosity!

Fixing those vacant eyes upon me, he advanced—slowly—nearer and nearer until I lost control of myself and sprang up to cover behind the table!

"No—no! Don't touch me—go away!" I screamed in a frenzy, then collapsed half fainting when he turned and strode mechanically from the room!

Only for a moment did my terror allow me to lie there! I staggered to my feet—it was his life or mine! I knew the outcome if he attacked me, unless—unless I could take him unaware!

With throbbing heart and quaking limbs, I stole softly after him. Leaning from a window which opens on the narrow, well-like air shaft, I found him; and from his attitude, I knew he had just tossed poor Betsy's body down the shaft. If I could only reach him before he discovered me! What an opportunity! Sick with dread lest he turn about, I crept forward as stealthily as ever a starving tiger stalked a doe! Surely the terrible pounding of my heart would arouse him! No—he still gazed downward! Nearer—nearer I crept until my outstretched hands almost touched him, I gathered my strength and leaped! Clasping his knees, I shot him out into the darkness, in spite of the grip he obtained on the sill!

Leaning out perilously, I listened; then my brain whirled, and I staggered back to my chair! An icy hand seemed to grip my throat—chills coursed my spine!

In God's name, what was it I had hurled from the window? Not a cry—not a sound of impact on the stones below! I had listened, but no sound came up! Could he have caught something and stayed his plunge down these four stories?

The thought sent me running, and a moment later I was again leaning from the window examining the shaft with

my flashlight. Ah-h! there he was—a crumpled, shapeless mass! Never again would he trouble me!

But why had I not heard him strike the stones? I shuddered—I must get a grip on myself, or something would break! Rest—sleep—that was what I needed. A mild sleeping draught, and I crawled shivering into bed, comforting myself with the knowledge that—It would never molest me.

For hours, it seemed, I tossed and thought—cursing my nerves, the impotent drug, and It. Sleep! Sleep! I must have it or go mad! The draught was not strong enough—I would double the dose!

Swinging my feet to the floor, I was about to arise, when a sound from the hall outside my door—a sound as though some heavy body was being dragged along the floor—brought back all my terror! With ears straining and eyes wide with dread, I stared at the door—it moved slowly—slowly—jerkily—half open—then—I saw—*It!* Humping—slithering—like a monstrous worm, a hideous, gruesome mass of broken, twisted flesh, It rolled in and started for me!

Loathsome—repulsive—It flattened out with each awkward lurch—quivered sickeningly—then, swelling with waves of snaky contractions, arose for another plunge! And all the while, from the face, crushed out of all human semblance, two shiftless eyes—two eyes absolutely expressionless—dead—stared at me! Pent up terror suffocated me! I could not move—I could not cry out—I could not tear my fascinated gaze from those two fish-like eyes!

Nearer—nearer! One of the bloody hands reached out, clutched my ankle, and began to fumble upward!

A horrible scream broke the spell—I tore myself from that awful hand and sprang upright on the bed! With eyes unblinking and purpose unchanged, It grasped the bed and began to draw Itself up! Higher—higher! The shapeless head was on a level with my feet! Another heaving hunch—It hung a moment—then lost Its hold and slumped down almost to the floor!

Freed from that cold, relentless gaze, my paralysis left me! I leaped over It—fell—scrambled to my feet and rushed wildly into my study! Quick as I was, I saw It flop out of my bedroom as I slammed and locked the study door!

With my back against the door, my pounding heart choking me, and that slithering slump in my ears, hopeless despair seized me! Then in that moment of panic, the training of years of research brought a thought which sent me stumbling to my desk! My colleagues—the world must know of this horrible, unreal, unbelievable consequence of my operation! It must not be lost!

It is the end! I feel it! There is no escape from that relentless, soulless monster! I hear it now! It is at the door—pushing—sliding—

IT WAS almost daylight, when Detectives Gibbons and O'Mara, responding to a wild, incoherent telephone call, entered the apartment of Dr. Horace Tremaine, the eminent brain surgeon, and were greeted by the noisy, excited barking of a little fox terrier.

Sprawled across his desk, a revolver grasped in his hand and a bullet hole in his right temple, lay Dr. Tremaine; and, upon the desk beneath him, they found a heap of closely written sheets—all clear and legible except the last page, which was scrawling and irregular, plainly indicating a terrible mental stress.

The officers reported the facts, and, the air shaft revealed nothing, and upon the operating table in the laboratory was the accumulated dust of weeks of disuse.

The officers reported the facts, and, when inquiry brought the reply that Major and Mrs. Selwyn Morris were still in France, the weird story of the manuscript was attributed to mental aberration and pigeon-holed, where I found it.

A Singular Experiment

"IN the anatomy house of Trinity College, Dublin," says Dr. Wilkinson, "is a human skeleton of between seven and eight feet high. They told me it belonged to one Magrath, an orphan, in this county, somewhere near Cloyne. This child fell into the hands of the famous Berkeley, then bishop of that see. This subtile doctor who denied the existence of matter, was as inquisitive in his physical researches as he was whimsical in his metaphysical speculations. When I tell you that he had well-nigh put an end to his own existence, by experimenting what are the sensations of a person dying on the gallows, you will be more ready to forgive him for the treatment of the poor foundling, whose story I am now to finish. The bishop had a strange fancy to know whether it was not in the power of art to increase the human stature. And this unhappy orphan appeared to him a fit subject for trial. He made his essay according to his preconceived theory, whatever it might be, and the consequence was, that Magrath became seven feet high in his sixteenth year. He was carried through various parts of Europe, for the last years of his life, and exhibited as the prodigious Irish giant. But so disproportioned were his organs that he cantracted an universal imbecility of body and mind, and died of old age at twenty. His under jaw was monstrous, yet the skull did not exceed the common size."

Pentilly House, Cornwall

MR. TILLY, once the owner of Pentilly House, was a celebrated atheist of the last age. He was a man of wit, and had by rote all the ribaldry and commonplace jests against religion and scripture which are well suited to display pertness and folly, and to unsettle a giddy mind, but are offensive to men of sense, whatever their opinions may be, and are neither intended nor adapted to investigate the truth. The brilliancy of Mr. Tilly's wit, however, carried him a degree further than we often meet with in the annals of profaneness. In general the witty atheist is satisfied with entertaining his contemporaries, but Mr. Tilly wished to have his sprightliness known to posterity. With this view, in ridicule of the resurrection, he obliged his executors to place his dead body, in his usual garb, and in his elbow chair, upon the top of a hill, and to arrange on a table before him, bottles, glasses, pipes, and tobacco. In this situation he ordered himself to be immured in a tower of such magnitude and such dimensions as he described, where he proposed, he said, patiently to await the event! All this was done; and the tower, still enclosing its tenant, remains as a monument of his impiety and profaneness.

The Man Who Lived Next Door To Himself

By FRANK OWEN

I HAD NOT lived in the old house on Sheridan Square a week before I received a visit from my next-door neighbor and at once my interest was aroused. His name was Alladina Visrain and he was a full-blooded Persian from Sultanabad. Never have I met a man who was more learned and cultured than he. The Orient and the Occident had contributed their best to his knowledge. He was both a doctor of medicine and philosophy, an ardent devotee of research work of any kind.

There was nothing about his appearance that would have caused comment as he passed along the street unless one remarked on his finely molded, clear-cut features and the intense brilliance of his keen black eyes. He dressed simply, in dark clothes of American make and the quietness of his manner gave him dignity and even charm. His voice was as distinct and clear as though he had studied elocution for years, yet so softly did he speak, the words seemed but the echo of a dream.

"Since we are evidently to be neighbors for a considerable time," he said slowly, "I thought it would not be out of place for me to call and introduce myself. As a rule when a man moves to a country town all the neighbors visit him almost immediately. This is not the custom in the city. Yet how much more lonesome and cold is a great metropolis. To walk among crowds and to behold no familiar face is worse than to journey alone through the desert."

At my urgent invitation, he seated himself in a great chair by the side of the open-hearth, a companion one to mine and together we talked about a miscellany of trifling things until an unearthly hour. It was, I thought, the beginning of a friendship which was to continue for many a long day, but if I had known that evening how close that friendship was destined to be, my eyes would have bulged from their sockets in stark raving horror.

That evening was one of many which we spent together. We had much in common, we found, for we were both writers and both of us were intensely interested in unusual things.

"For years," said Alladina Visrain one evening as we sat smoking cigars before the fire in my rooms, "I have been somewhat of a student of psychology, psychanalysis, spiritualism and the transition of souls. In our religions we are all like children. The Christian scoffs at the Yogi and the Theosophist. The Buddhist and the Mohammedan look down on people of all other religions. Is it not amusing? Every man thinks his own belief is the true religion. The South Sea Islander worshipping the moon and the stars, the Siamese refusing to kill rattlesnakes and looking with awe at sacred tigers, the natives of India bowing before sick white elephants—is not life a most interesting enigma? We imagine that we have advanced a great deal since the Stone Age, but have we actually progressed at all? Does not the recent European conflict prove that the caveman is still very much alive within us? The changes recorded have been solely in exterior things such as dress and manners. Men scoffed at Morse when he spoke of his telegraph, but it came to be and now we have the radio as well. We have learned to pick up messages from the very ether about us. Someday other things will be accomplished quite easily which are now only spoken of in theory. Science is still very much in its infancy. For more than ten years I have believed that it would be possible for two men to exchange their souls if they were in the proper key, in perfect harmony and tune with one another. That is to say, to put it more concisely, I believe that it might be possible for your soul to enter my body and my soul to enter your body and when I speak of the soul I mean all that intangible part of a person that is mental, his mind, thoughts, likes and dislikes, ideas, etc. The great Caruso used to tap a glass with a knife and then sing the same note as came from the tinkling glass. When the two notes met at exactly the same moment, the glass was shattered to atoms. You see the notes opposed each other. Now if two natures or souls were in perfect harmony, without opposition of any kind, who knows what might be accomplished if the impulse of both were toward the same object."

"I am deeply interested in what you say," I told him. "It is a rather wild theory but I am sufficient of a scientist never to laugh at anything. Only fools ridicule that which they do not understand."

"I am glad to hear you speak like that," he went on, "for had your manner been otherwise I would have terminated the present conversation when I finished speaking a moment ago. However, since you are so obviously interested I will proceed to acquaint you with my theory." As he spoke, he drew from his pocket a round crystal ball about three inches in diameter. It was so clear and polished that it shone in the fireglow like a great round diamond. "This thought-sphere came from the East," he said slowly, "and there are many legendary tales connected with it. It is said that he who possesses it can have what he desires. Whether or not there is any truth in this, I cannot say, and yet you are my friend, our personalities are in harmony and that is all I desire. If you are agreeable we will attempt right now to materialize my theory." He did not wait for me to assent. He took my acquiesence for granted. He walked over and placed the ball in the center of a small teakwood table. Then he placed two chairs beside the table so that they were directly opposite each other.

As he did so, he said, "Come, and who knows, perhaps it will be your good fortune to be a participant in one of the greatest discoveries of the age."

He seated himself at the table. "Before you sit down," he directed, "swish off the lights, for a room in darkness save for the glowing fire, is far more fitting for such an experiment as we are to attempt, than one that is brilliantly lighted."

After doing as he desired, plunging the room in semi-darkness, I sat down opposite him. "Now," he said slowly, "you must concentrate your whole mind on this experiment. Coue says that the imagination controls the will. Perhaps he is right. I never argue, but I think

the imagination and the will both react on one another. We are desirous of exchanging souls or perhaps I should say personalities for the word 'soul' at best is a rather ambiguous term suited mostly to the art of poets. You must let your gaze rest intently on the crystal ball, you must will to make the exchange, and you must let your imagination make you believe that the exchange has been effected. I will do the same thing and if we can make our desires coincide perfectly at the exact moment through the medium of the crystal ball, what we desire will assuredly come to pass. It is written that a man can have what he wishes if he wants it sufficiently enough."

HE CEASED speaking and we both focused our gaze intently on the crystal ball. The room was in utter silence. It was in the back of the house and so no discordant sound from the street shattered the solitude which was so intense it seemed to hang about the room in folds. And the far corners of the room seemed to be enveloped in curtains of velvet black. No object was discernible, except that queer little crystal globule which shimmered fantastically in the fire-glow, seeming to scintillate with a dozen different prismatic colors. And now as we sat staring at it, it suddenly commenced to glow with a strange blue light. All the other tones of color faded. Evidently the fire in the grate had burned low and only a bit of blue flame remained. And yet the color of the crystal ball increased steadily, the light intensified. It was almost blinding. It blurred my vision. Everything grew hazy as though I were enveloped in a fog. The silence was as cold as death. I seemed to be losing consciousness. Then steadily the crystal ball came back into focus again, my vision cleared. The blue flame had died out and again the scintillating colors returned. It was a most odd experience but odder still was the realization that I was gazing at the crystal ball from the other side of the table. It was as though I had changed my seat. With a cry of surprise, I jumped to my feet for I knew that I had not moved since I had seated myself at the table. As I rose I knocked over the table and the crystal ball crashed to the ground and was shattered into a thousand glittering pieces.

Visrain quickly switched on the lights.

"What have you done?" he fairly shrieked. "Now we are engulfed in a frightful calamity. We can never again get back our own personalities."

As I looked up into his eyes, my blood turned cold for I was gazing into my own face. The experiment had proven successful.

I scarcely know how to set down the events that followed. There is so much that I would like to write, so much I wish to record and yet it is hard to set down the things which have an important bearing on my particular case.

For a while that night Visrain and I raved about that room as though we were mad. We cursed and raved as though we had ceased to be human. Often we hear folks envying each other, expressing a desire to be in someone else's place. Now that peculiar position had been vouchsafed to me and I found little of pleasure in it. I longed to be in my own body again. The body at best is but a shell in which we live but it is the shell by which we are known, the tangible thing by which our friends recognize us. Probably the day will eventually come when men will cease to form opinions and impressions from exteriors.

After we had raved about the room for an hour or perhaps it was longer for neither of us had any thought of time, we sat down beside the open-fire again and tried to sanely reason out the strange problem with which we were confronted. We had changed bodies, I say 'we' advisedly because the real man lives inside each one of us. The smug hypocritical smile and the exaggerated burst of assumed enthusiasm are not the earmarks of a real person. Visrain's soul and personality were within my body but nevertheless he was still Visrain. After we had talked and argued and theorized for a great while, we finally decided that we would change houses voluntarily even as we had changed bodies. This would mechanically prevent people from talking and besides we would not be inconvenienced in the slightest because we could visit back and forth as often as we desired. It was thus that I found myself in the peculiar position of living next door to myself. Luckily both Visrain and I lived alone so there was no one to complicate matters. Although that is not strictly true, for Visrain had a Japanese servant named Koto who was the very acme of perfection. He seemed to anticipate his master's every want and it was a source of keen enjoyment to be waited on by him.

My nearest living relative dwelt in San Francisco, an aunt with whom I never corresponded. She was as interested in me as though I did not exist at all and as for myself, I heartly reciprocated the compliment. I was not anxious to build up a friendship with the eccentric old lady because I realized that by so doing I might be bothered with visits from her and this I wished to avoid. At best I have but little patience and can only tolerate people with whom I have much in common.

SUCH A person was Vera Gray, an artist who lived in Greenwich Village and earned a splendid living drawing cover designs for the national magazines. Vera was a girl in a million, a deep thinker and at the same time more beautiful than any of the models who posed for her. She had skin like old ivory and the olive tone to her complexion, together with her wondrous taste in dress, made of her a most alluring girl. She was tall and slim and her white hands were the most graceful and expressive I have ever beheld. They made almost a symphony in loveliness. I suppose I am writing rather madly and yet I assure you I am sane enough. I have recently been examined by three alienists and while they admit that I am somewhat queer, they have unanimously stated that my mentality is far above the average. But I am getting ahead of my story. It is hard when writing a narrative of this sort to keep the sequence of events in their proper order.

Although I hated to mention Vera Gray to Visrain I knew that I had to do so for if I had disappeared entirely she would have immediately raised an alarm and publicity more than anything else we desired to avoid.

"You must call on Vera Gray," I told Visrain, "and I think it might be wise for me to accompany you. That will help to lessen the chances of your making a bad blunder. Talk very little and consult me whenever the opportunity presents itself. At this interview we must be extremely careful."

A few evenings later we visited Vera Gray. Luck was with us for there were several other persons in her apartment and one young fellow in particular, Gordon Harris, wished to do all the talking. He went into ecstasies over Vera's paintings and had something to say about every one she exhibited. Only once did she and I get an opportunity to converse together.

"I'm delighted that you came tonight," she said sincerely, "because you interest me in a rather strange way. You seem to remind me of someone I know very well yet I am positive that I have never beheld your face before until tonight. Sometime I hope you can come to tea and we can have a rather interesting chat together when none of these ceaseless talkers are present. I suppose it is rather unconventional for me to invite you when you are a total stranger to me but I feel that we have something

in common, as though we knew each other years ago." She laughed softly. "Perhaps," she said, "the Theosophists are right after all and you and I were friends more than ten thousand years ago."

I had no time to answer, for Gordon Harris came and claimed her attention and I cannot say that I was sorry, for under the circumstances, to such a speech, what was there for me to say?

As we walked home another complication arose. Visrain confessed to me that he loved her. "She is the most adorably perfect girl I have ever known," he told me. "And I am the most miserable of men. No doubt as long as my personality is in your body, I could go in and win her. But I hate deception and I wouldn't want to do anything that was unfair to you, for already, I think, I have caused you trouble enough."

But despite his words to the contrary, Visrain did make love to Vera Gray and she seemed to be far more attracted to him then she had ever been to me.

"I am never unhappy when I am with you," she told him frankly, "and no matter how trivial is the subject we discuss I am always interested. You used to bore me sometimes, but now all that is passed."

Visrain placed his arm about her. "Something stronger than life, stronger than death is drawing us together," he breathed tensely. "There is no use in either of us fighting against it. It is destiny. Allah wills that we should live united." He drew her unresisting to him. "Promise me," he said, "that you will marry me before summer comes." And in a fit of recklessness she promised.

Late that night Visrain made known his perfidy to me. In all fairness to him, I must admit that he confessed everything quite openly.

"There is no use fighting against love," he cried. "It is the most subtle poison known. Do you think I am happy? I am the most miserable man in all the world. First, I robbed you of your body. Now I have robbed you of your love. Nowhere on earth is there so vile a thief as I. But I am poisoned by love. I cannot, I will not live without Vera Gray. Yet I am unworthy of her."

He stormed and raged up and down the room like a caged beast. I said no word because I realized that none was needed. His own conscience was scourging his soul far worse than anything I could have said. I just sat as though carved of stone, watching the torment which he was suffering. His eyes glistened as though he were almost mad. He tore up and down the room as though he wished to escape from himself. But that is not strictly true, he was unhappy because he wished to escape from myself. It was my body which had caused him all his sorrow.

Finally I rose from my chair. "I think I will go to bed," I told him simply. He made no answer and I left the room and walked back to the house next door.

In five minutes I was in bed but I could not sleep. I lay and tossed upon my pillow as though I were a victim of acute insomnia. And yet somehow although I feigned weariness I knew that I was really far from sleep. There seemed to be an ominous silence in the air, a calm such as might precede a deadly tropical storm. It seemed to me as though some dreadful calamity was imminent, but what that calamity was I had not the faintest idea. My room was as dark as the inside of a coffin. I could not distinguish a thing because of the heavy curtains which were carefully drawn across the windows. The blackness was so intense that it seemed peopled with all sorts of wild wraiths and distorted forms. I knew the hallucinations were but the imaginings of my overwrought nerves. Yet the great bulk of blackness seemed to bear down upon me as though it were a solid thing. I felt as though I were suffocating, as though I were engulfed alive in a pit of blackness. My forehead was cold with a dank sweat and my hands shook as though I were a hundred years old.

I switched on the electric lights and looked at my face or rather I should say Visrain's face, in the mirror. It was ashen gray. Hastily I dressed. I seemed impelled onward by some great hidden force. When I had finished dressing I crept cautiously down the stairs. I was careful to make no sound that would awaken Koto who slept in a little room off the lower hall. Silently I crept from the house and stole to the house next door. I unlocked the front door and entered like a thief. I had no trouble in effecting an entrance because Visrain and I carried keys to both houses. We believed it would more readily facilitate matters if we did so.

Inside I found the light in the living room still burning. I walked to the threshold and there I stopped as though frozen to ice, and well I might, for the sight which I beheld was the most awful man ever gazed upon. In the chair was my own body. Blood was trickling sluggishly from a bullet wound in the right temple. By the side of the table lay a revolver. Facing a problem which he could not solve, Visrain had blown out his brains. For one brief moment, I gazed at the ghastly sight, then my overwrought nerves broke and I slipped to the floor unconscious.

How long I remained so I do not know for when I opened my eyes it was broad daylight. In the chair the body still sat and I imagined an eerie smile hovered over the rigid lips as though it were grinning at me. I rose to my feet. My head ached dully and I walked like a man who had been ill for ages. I could scarcely drag one foot after the other. I seated myself in a chair opposite the lifeless body and stared at it as though my very gaze could rekindle it with life again. Now my predicament was worse than ever. My body was dead, sitting grotesquely before me on a great chair. I was surprised that the expression on its face could ever be so frightful. Lost to me also was my friend. What had happened to his soul I did not know. Perhaps it also was in the room with me. I shuddered as I thought that now Visrain would try to reclaim his body.

THE days that immediately followed I can only look back upon as on a nightmare. I did not employ an undertaker to embalm the body, nor did I make any attempt to see that it was decently buried. Under the circumstances I doubt if anyone else would have done so either. Despite the ghastly, blood-clotted, repulsive face, the body was mine. And I was still alive. I could not make myself believe that my body was really dead. As the days dragged by, I found myself more and more often creeping into the house next door to gaze into that face which was turning a sickly blue. Sometimes I used to frantically shake the loathsome corpse as though it were only sleeping and that if I tried hard enough I could awaken it. It drew me to it like a magnet. Many a night I remained with the hideous thing till dawn. I think at the time I must have been slightly insane, yet as I have written, three alienists have recently examined me and they pronounce my mind to be in excellent condition. Still my actions then were not those of a sane person. I used to sit and talk to the corpse by the hour, I argued and expostulated with it. Sometimes I attempted to make it eat and drink. Once I even succeeded in pouring a bit of liquor through the set lips. A thing which gave me hope was the fact that the beard on the face continued to grow. How could the corpse be dead, I argued, and the beard still grow? I have since learned that this is a perfectly natural phenomenon, that it is quite usual for a man's hair to grow after he has ceased to live.

And now it seemed to me that my cup of despair was filled to the brim, that no further calamity could be added to it, yet the figure had still another horror in store for me. One night as I bent over the corpse I suddenly became conscious that I was not alone in the house. I had not heard a sound, nor had I caught the faintest glimpse of anyone but still I was sure that there was at least one other person in the house besides myself. At such moments it seems as though man has a supernatural sixth sense buried in his subconscious mind which warns him of approaching danger. To say I was shocked would not nearly have described my condition. I was in a panic. Fear made of me a total wreck. The very marrow froze in my bones and I felt as sick and weak as though I were a plague victim. Even in my fear I realized that I was in a most unexplainable position, unless the hidden personage should prove to be the soul of Alladina Visrain. As the thought came to me, the curtains at the end of the room parted slightly and through the opening I could see the muzzle of a revolver leveled directly at me. As I beheld it, I quickly switched off the electric lights plunging the room into absolute darkness. Then I made a wild leap for the other door, but in the darkness I tripped over the corpse with such force that I dragged it from the chair and together we fell to the floor with a dull thud. Fear now had me absolutely in its power. I lost my reason. Instead of trying to get away I commenced wrestling with the lifeless body. And as I wrestled, there came to my already weakened nerves another severe shock. As we writhed about the floor two hands clutched at my throat and anchored there with a frightful grip. It seemed as though the dead had come to life again. Then other hands grasped my arms and legs. There seemed to be at least a half dozen bodies bending over me. In that moment my strength seemed to multiply. Dread made of me a formidable opponent. I became a machine. I flung my arms about in every direction like flails. Sometimes my fists crashed against warm flesh and I could hear the grunts of my adversaries as the blows struck home. But the hands about my throat gripped tighter. I could scarcely breathe. I struggled terribly for breath. For one bit of air I would have given all I possessed in the world. Finally someone mercifully turned on the lights and to my horror I found myself surrounded by policemen. None too gently they slipped a pair of handcuffs over my wrists but I did not care, for the one who held my throat released his grip and I could breathe again.

NOW I am sitting in a prison cell. I am to be tried next week for murder, the murder of my own self. They would not allow me to be released on bail, for in the eyes of the world I have taken a human life. Ever since my strange disappearance, detectives had been searching for me. It was Vera Gray who raised the alarm. Now I am writing the true story of all that has transpired. I intend to present it at my trial. What the verdict will be I cannot say, nor do I really care, for they have buried my body and Vera has gone into mourning because she believes I am dead. Even if I am acquitted, what does the future hold in store for me? I have been examined by three alienists since I have been in prison. They are unanimous in declaring me sane. Perhaps this will help my case somewhat. I also intend to see Vera. I shall recall to her countless little incidents that happened in the past that are known only to her and me. I believe in time, when my story becomes known, I will be acquitted but it may take months, and afterwards what have I to look forward to? Nothing but memories, memories of Vera which are sadly beautiful, memories of my dead body sitting upright in the house next door, which are so ghastly that they will haunt me forever. I will be just a poor broken bit of humanity, a man who once lived next door to himself and has ceased to be happy now that his neighbor is gone.

Singular Combat

IN the reign of Henry IV., twelve English Barons gave out that certain ladies, whom they named, were not entitled, by birth, beauty, or education, to the high rank they held at court; and that they would take up arms against any twelve champions in Europe who dare come forth in their defense. Intimation of this challenge was received in Portugal, and as none had hitherto undertaken to appear in defense of the injured ladies, Magrico, with eleven other Portuguese cavaliers, set out from Oporto to espouse their cause; having previously obtained permission from their sovereign, John I. The English monarch, on being apprised of their arrival, prepared a splendid banquet suitable to the occasion; to him was left to choose the arms to be used by the combatants, and to appoint the day and the situation, which was on the south banks of the Thames. The spectators being assembled in a vast amphitheatre, the champions rode into the arena at the sound of the trumpet, each armed with a sword and lance. Upon the appearance of the Portuguese, the circle resounded with applause, particularly on the part of the ladies, who were present. As soon as the king, who presided at the spectacle, had given the signal, the attack commenced, and was maintained for a considerable time with great skill and courage on both sides, insomuch, that victory for some time remained doubtful. The Portuguese, however, being very expert at the lance, and animated by the cheers of the ladies, wounded several of the adversaries, and unhorsed others; so that at length the king proclaimed the conquerors. The ladies now, with acclamations of joy, assembled round the victors; crowned them with chaplets of roses, interwoven with ribbands, which they carried off in triumph. And further to express their gratitude, at the departure of their gallant defenders, they presented them with swords, spears, and shields, ornamented with various devices, as trophies of their victory. Nor were the honors less which awaited them at their return to Portugal; they were received in triumph, and caressed by the ladies, whose cause they vowed to defend all over the world.

MYSTERY RIVER

By ELWIN J. OWENS

PILOT WRIGHT NELSON was making his first long trip alone in his biplane. He had crossed the mountain range in western Washington and had left the snow-capped peaks far behind. The narrow neck of northern Idaho had been passed over with the same speed, and then he was over a fertile valley in Montana. How beautiful it did look to him. The vast fields of waving grain, from his height, appeared like a green sea with just enough breeze to fan its surface into gentle waves.

He slowed his machine and lowered his elevation so that he could get a better view. The closer he came to earth, the more absorbed his thoughts became in the beauty of the country.

Snap! Crack! Something broke. Pilot Nelson lost his head, so to speak. The machine was out of his control and started its plunge downward. "Five hundred feet to go! Can I make it safely? What will mother say?" These were the last sane thoughts that flashed through his mind. Everything turned black before his eyes. To him if seemed that his body was shrinking. He was dropping down through space a dead weight.

The earth seemed to open up. His falling body took on momentum. Into the opened chasm he fell. Down between its ragged sides, he glided, even faster than the plane. Faster, faster, faster he went. Suddenly he hit bottom with a thud that almost flattened him.

He realized himself alone in a strange world, surrounded by strange beings. More than that, he was in the middle of a milky river; and when he tried to right himself, he found that his body floated easily in an upright position with his head above the surface.

He surveyed the situation. At the source of the river, he observed huge propeller blades similar to the ones on his biplane, only a hundred times larger. They were fixed to stationary supports but were slowly rotating, forcing the liquid of the mysterious river from them. Turning his gaze in the opposite direction, he noted that beyond him lay monstrous mountains, such as he had never dreamed of seeing. More still became the mystery, the river was being forced to run up hill by the huge propellers.

Upon the bank, some distance from him, were nude persons. They came nearer to him. Such ponderous masses of human flesh, he had never seen. Large rolls of fat encircled their bodies, making them appear like human forms built up of odd sized automobile tires piled one upon the other. Their bodies were gigantic, but such small heads. No larger than his fist. And eyes no larger than those of small birds.

A crowd of them gathered on the bank. They conversed with each other by means of radio head-sets and used floating aerials. All seemed to be happy. All seemed to be looking in his direction. He tried to call to them. They paid no heed. But when he motioned that he was hungry, they laughed heartily and plucked straws from the ground. Through these straws they gorged themselves with the fluid of the river.

Having drunk their fill, they again laughed heartily, wiped their lips, motioned him to drink the same, and moved inland.

Pilot Nelson took a swallow from the river. It nauseated him for a few moments. Then he began to feel his flesh bulge out and his strength began to return. He plunged over on his side and tried to swim to the shore.

The contents of the river became thicker and thicker as he progressed. Soon he found it impossible to swim further. He tried to climb to the surface, but when upright he could only get his head above the milky matter that surrounded him.

Soon he saw the inhabitants moving in large processions in the direction of the huge propellers at the source of the river. They threw large tangled masses of wire high above their heads. These, too, floated in mid air and he discovered that they were aerials, very much similar to the ones used in conversation, only many times larger. They snatched electric current from the atmosphere. The propellers began to turn more rapidly. They began to spin. The contents of the river began to move more rapidly up the inclined bed and he was carried with it.

Besides being forced to flow up hill at a rapid rate, the river contained several whirlpools. Pilot Nelson floated into one of these. It spun him around like a top. He soon became dizzy. His vision was hazy. On and on the river carried him.

THE ATMOSPHERE became warmer and warmer the further up the hillside he floated. At last, the heat was torrid. Again his body began to shrink. Smaller and smaller, he became until, at length, he seemed no more than three feet high.

The river was changing color. He was out of the whirlpool. The current had slackened to a slowly moving mass. The color changed from white to cream, then to chocolate, finally becoming dark brown. And, as it changed color, it grew warmer and warmer until it was hot. His body was becoming seared. His clothing dropped off. His flesh was fast being dried out. Lighter and lighter he grew and, as he grew lighter, his body floated more and more above the surface. At last, he was fully emerged, nothing but a miniature of his former self.

A still stranger land confronted him. Great rocks stood out, the only landmarks in the vast expanse of seemingly barren waste. Far back, he saw pigmies of dark complexion floating about, their feet just skimming the surface. Close to them, from out of the fissures in the rocky bed, floated up gases of many colored hues.

He inhaled a deep breath and, to his surprise, he, too, floated across the surface. He was being carried by a gentle breeze in the direction of the pigmies. A great light of purple-white, so bright that it nearly blinded him at first, served as their sun.

The pigmies seemed very busy. They did not notice him. He observed them carefully. No hair, no ears, no nose, no mouth. Simply a dark ball for a head and a face form that resembled a small, old copper funnel. Through this funnel they drank freely of a boiling hot liquid. Their eyes were large and green. Their arms were nothing but bare bones and, at the end, were cupped hands with the fingers webbed together.

They were boiling metals and precious stones in the fissures of the rocks. Silently, he watched them. One would dip up diamonds in his cupped hands and sail away; another would dip platinum

and float off in another direction. He followed their course in the light of the great purple-white lamp and noted that they deposited their wares here and there in small quantities in what seemed the under surface of the earth's crust.

Suddenly, he heard what he thought was the chirping of a bird. The chirp became more shrill. He looked about him and saw millions of these pigmies floating in from all directions. They surrounded him. A leader floated to the center of the assembly and began to scratch characters in the stone with his chisel-like foot. Soon, all was commotion. A stiff breeze came from a fissure in the rocks and blew toward the river.

Pilot Nelson was carried in its course. When he reached the river, his body took on weight; and again he dropped helpless into the dark brown liquid. Numerous air currents began to agitate the stream. It began to flow again, and again it flowed up hill.

The huge purple-white lamp became brighter than ever. It blinded him. He could feel himself being carried rapidly through space by the current. The air was becoming cooler. He was somewhat refreshed and his body enlarged to its natural size. Slowly, the dazzling light became fainter. He could see.

GIANT vegetation was on all sides. No leaves or branches. Just huge, rough, gnarled roots. Again, the current of the river stopped. He was in blood-red waters, just a little more thin than the liquid had previously been. Still he floated with just his head emerged.

Mammoth animals were feeding upon the roots. Animals with skin like elephants, and legs no more than a foot long, twenty of them on a side. Their jaws resembled massive stone crushers. As they chewed into the vegetation with sickening sound, a red fluid came freely from the roots. This, the animals gulped up greedily, allowing only a small quantity to stream from the corners of their mouths. They drank their fill and soon became as large as the gas bags of dirigibles. They fell asleep where they fed.

Thunderous shrieks rent the air and Pilot Nelson heard the flapping of monstrous wings. Vultures with wings sixty feet long came to the spot. As they came closer, he observed that they had sword-like bills from six to eight feet long. To him, they paid no heed; but attacked the sleeping animals, plunging their bills into their prey. Blood ran in rivulets from the struggling beasts.

The sight became too much for Pilot Nelson. He tried to move, but found that he was paralyzed with horror. He sighed. To his surprise, his sigh was as loud as the sound of a locomotive whistle.

The vultures were attracted by his involuntary expression. Overhead and about him, they circled in numbers, flapping their long, ponderous wings violently. Waves began to form on the surface of the river. Soon it began to move slowly. Again it carried him up the hill. Feathers of immense size dropped on all sides of him. A down from them seemed to fill the air, which his sight could not penetrate.

Slowly the river flowed on. He was his normal size, but he had grown weak. In time, the air cleared of feathers and he could see. The light was like a summer day when the sun is out of sight.

He was slowly floating into a great lake, set amongst numerous mountains. Its contents was murky green. When he floated upright, his feet occasionally touched something. Soon he could stand on its bed. The current ceased and he found himself in dead water. Such a dreadful odor. It was terrible, as of dead things.

On a far-off shore, he could see green vegetation, the same shade as the water. Slowly, he made his way in that direction. The banks were covered with moss of a pale green color. Such long, hairy moss. All a tangled mass. Through this he dragged on, almost fatigued.

Small bushes covered the soil in front of him. He paused to examine them. Small, square leaves, completely covered with worm nests, warts and other growths. The branches seemed to be covered with silken ashes which fell at his touch.

In his wanderings, he came upon a spring of water, the first natural thing he had seen. But it had a peculiar taste. He investigated its source. Instead of flowing continually, it spurted in jets. He observed more carefully. A huge muscular body, the color of an oyster lay almost buried in the sand. It expanded and then contracted. When it contracted, it forced the water from an opening in its side.

The sight of this caused Pilot Nelson to grow weak, so weak that he could not stand. He dropped down to rest.

Almost immediately, a large, grass-green spider spun a thread across his chest and attached the end to the vegetation on the other side. Back across his legs, the spider spun another thread. He tried to rise but found that he was tightly bound. Soon, numerous threads completely bound his struggling form.

Strange noises came from all sides. He tried to turn his head so that he could see the objects but found that the spider's web had bound his head. A slimy, crawling thing passed over his body. It began to chew at his toes. Such pain. He tried to call out, but could make no sound.

Then, a strange, small bird with four wings flew over his face and began to peck at his fingers. Others came and he was being besieged on all sides. One became more greedy than the rest and in the struggle broke the thread that bound his head. He could now turn his eyes in the direction of his attackers.

Suddenly a film seemed to envelop his body and he was immune from pain. But slowly and surely the birds were picking away his body piece by piece.

OUT OF the slimy recess of the grass-green lake came a crawling, wriggling thing. It was half snake and half fish. As he lay with his face toward the lake, he watched it approach him, coming as if by instinct. It carried its head erect by means of small wings attached just below and back of its eyes. Its mouth was small, with short jaws which it kept opening and shutting as it wriggled its way toward him. Closer and closer, it came. He could now see plainly that its back was covered with mossy vegetation, its belly was covered with scales. Its teeth or fangs consisted of two sharp protruding teeth on the lower jaw and a sort of broad flat tooth on the upper jaw. The lower jaw it kept on moving up and down as if anticipating a feast of human flesh.

He tried to turn his eyes from the object but learned that the film that had deadened the pain had finally paralyzed his muscles. He could not move his eyes. They remained set on the object.

When close to him, froth came from the corners of its mouth. It plunged its head against his side, sinking the teeth of its lower jaw deep into his flesh. Up came its head and it had gouged out a piece of flesh. With one gulp, the snake-like thing swallowed the mouthful. It drove in its fangs for another piece. Again and again it kept gulping down his flesh.

The effect of the film was now dying out. He could feel the painful stabs of the fangs in his side, and for the first time realized that the birds had left him. He was alone with this carnivorous thing. The pain was growing more intense. In his agony, he tried to move. He could turn his head but nothing more.

The fangs again pierced his side and he could feel them tearing away his bowels. He groaned and then lay quiet. The groan seemed to relieve his agony.

A human voice came quietly from a distance. "How is Wright this morning, Doctor?"

It was his mother's voice.

"I have just dressed the wound in his side. It is healing nicely. The crisis is passed. He seems to show some signs of consciousness and I think that he will be able to go home in the course of a month."

Pilot Wright Nelson opened his eyes and found himself in a hospital, his mother at his bedside. A smile showed in the corners of his mouth.

"Did the plane land all right, Mother?" he asked in a whisper.

"Yes, it is all right; but do you know that you have lain here for five days without showing any signs of life while I worried about you?" She leaned over and kissed his cheek. "Are you going to fly again?" she appealed.

"Never! I saw too much," was the quick response.

A Fantastic Fragment of Fiction

THE GOD YUANO

By MARJORIE DARTER

IT is near the first of the month when the sacrifice to "Yuano," the alligator, is made. The natives of the village daily pay homage to the brutes as they float in the swamp. They are afraid Yuano may cast his baleful glance upon them, when, such being the case, they would be offered up as sacrifices, since the lots would be sure to be against them.

It is the custom at this time for all in the village to assemble in the sacrificial hut and draw lots. These are of two sizes, long and short. Those who are unfortunate enough to draw short lots are sacrificed one month and the long lots are given the next, and so on.

Horrible? No, just customary sacrifice, not especially pleasant for the unlucky devils, but they believe in thus dying so that their spirits may be assured of eternal rest and happiness.

Is it strange that these words should come from a white man's pen? No, it is not, for I am dead and so am permitted to speak to the material world through others. Thus it is of my former life and death I shall tell.

It was the drawing of the lots, as I have said, and all were assembled to hear the chief Yuano priest read the sacrificial notes and decrees. He stated that twenty natives would appease the Gods this month and that old and young alike should draw.

I trembled and clung closer to my mother's skirts, for I was but a young lad and life was sweet to me. I did not like the ugly, grinning jaws and wickedly gleaming small eyes of the God Yuano. I did not wish to leave the flowers and beasts of this world for the "Eternal Sphere." So I clung the closer to my mother and tremblingly drew one of the straws the old priest held out to me. *It was a short straw!* Did I live, or—was I to be thrown in among those slimy, squirming bodies to be engulfed at one swallow or broken in so many pieces by the swish of a mighty tail?

Horrible shivers ran up and down my spine, little icy tinglings formed in my blood, cold sweat beaded my forehead, I trembled and shook and leaned heavily against my mother as the script was read. The short ones were to be offered this month!

God in heaven, what a death! I swayed limply forward in a dead faint as I dimly heard the wailing for those chosen twenty. Then all was blackness.

When I "came to," I was lying in a basket floating in the swamp! Huge jaws yawned about and stretched toward me; slimy, slippery bodies lunged against my frail craft. I screamed in my terror, one scream after another, till it seemed my lungs must surely burst under the strain. Still my craft remained intact, and gradually I became more quiet.

I then looked around for my other nineteen companions, but they were nowhere to be seen. At some distance from me I beheld another basket-like craft floating upside down. I shuddered and threw my arm up over my face. My very much beloved companions had already met death. I alone remained! Probably my life was prolonged because of this very fact, and Yuano was no longer hungry! Thus was I given a few more minutes respite in which to think upon the horrible death before me.

Day after day I floated down the swampy river propelled by the swishing of the heavy bodies of my tormentors in the black and rank waters. My little craft was still unhurt and I was buoyed up by the hope that I might starve to death before one of their lunges should upset me. But no, I was not to cheat the Gods thus, for a huge log crashed into me, and over I went with a shrill horrified cry into the open jaws of a waiting Yuano!

A terrible feeling of sharp knives literally tearing the tender flesh from my body, of huge breakers or stones crushing the life from me, and then, after a final moment of excruciating pain, I awoke to find myself standing calmly upon the back of a one time much-feared Yuano, while he crunched between his massive jaws a mass of blood and bones which had once been I!

I felt no emotion either of fear or of pain. But when the Yuano had finished his repast, I calmly stepped from one back to another and in less than five minutes had arrived in my native village. As I walked along the streets I spoke to several people, all of whom passed me by unseeing. I was rather hurt by this, as I thought they should be glad of my escape. However, I consoled myself with the thought of my mother's joy when she should again behold her beloved and much cherished son.

Hastening my stride I set forth for her hut. What was my surprise upon entering and greeting her to hear her say to my sister, "Vellen, Vellen, why couldn't it have been you? Oh, if only my son were here again. You are good

for nothing, while he—! Ah, my son, my son!"

Upon hearing these words I came to the conclusion that she had not seen or heard me, so spoke again, this time in a louder tone of voice. But she paid no heed and continued to weep and bemoan my fate.

Then a horrible, terrifying thought dawned upon my wondering brain. Suppose I were really dead? Suppose I had not escaped as I thought, and were in truth a spirit and no longer able to communicate with those I held dear to me on earth! As these terrible thoughts rushed upon me, I gasped and stumbled blindly from the hut. An insistent voice within monotonously repeated these words, "Dead, dead, yes, dead!"

So for weeks I wandered aimlessly over the Universe in a seemingly void space, without man, beast or reptile. I wandered over spacious cities, broad forest lands and at last, becoming weary, sank to the streets of a large city.

People rushed over me, through me, around me and in all directions. They were a curious people and so, having nothing to do, I watched them from mere curiosity. Then, as my interest grew, I centered my attention upon a few. I listened to what they were saying, and was startled to hear one gray-haired old gentleman remark, "Yes, sir, Maudin, I'm telling you I saw that spirit with my own eyes, and later communicated with it! How? With pen and paper. I have the proofs; come along and see for yourself. Then if you still disbelieve you may scoff."

At these words my heart gave a great leap and seemed to turn over in my breast. If one spirit could speak through others, why not I? Buoyed up with this hope and elation, I followed the two to see how it was done.

The little man and Maudin first entered a dark room and seated themselves at a table. Pen and paper were given Maudin.

"Now," said the other, "leave your hand lax and see what happens. Think of nothing. You will not long scoff."

Fully five minutes passed before the hand began to move, and then glancing up at the force which was moving the hand, I was not a little astonished to see a filmy, wraithlike being like myself standing beside me. The seance soon ended and the spirit departed.

All that day and the next I hovered near the little old gentleman, hoping to be able to attract his attention and speak to him through the medium of a pen. At last I succeeded and am now writing through that little gray-haired man's hand this very instant and intend to do so for some time, thereby keeping in touch with the material world.

Perhaps some will scoff at this and call it the imaginings of one a trifle given to the subject of spiritualism. Be that as it may, I have done my best to set down for all the story of my life and death; and now, this tale finished, I must away to my shadowy realm again.

Fatal Misfortune and Singular Instance of Affection in a Horse

"A SHORT time ago, Mr. Ellar of Oswaldkirk, and Mr. R. Marshall, son of Mr. Marshall, of East Newton, near Helmsley, being on a visit to Mr. Hesseletine, of Hambleton, and having spent a pleasant day, the latter intimated his intention of returning home that night, having promised to do so on account of his mother's indisposition. Fearless of danger, and little thinking it would be for the last time, he bade them good night and rode off. On the afternoon of the next day, Mr. Ellar returned, and called at Mr. Marshall's to inquire how his friend got home and how he was after his journey. Young Marshall's absence beyond the time fixed for his return had created some little uneasiness; but the effect of these inquiries of his friend and the companion of his visit, can scarcely be conceived; it was natural to indulge alarm; and alas! their forebodings were more than realized. Persons were dispatched in every direction in search of him, but the family were kept in suspense another night. Intelligence of his being missed had reached Hambleton House, from whence early on Tuesday morning, a party set out to examine every possible place of danger and before they had proceeded a quarter of a mile, they discovered his horse standing over him, at the bottom of a precipice from twenty to thirty yards in height, over which they had fallen. The force with which he had come to the ground had made an impression upon it and from the appearances, it was thought he had never moved after his fall but had died instantly. One circumstance deserves remark; the party who had found him attempted to lead the horse from the place in a direction the most easy of ascent. From its unwillingness or inability they could not succeed, but on their ascending the steep with its master, who had been placed in a sheep-box for that purpose, it immediately followed him, and on reaching the summit dropped down dead beside him. It was at first surmised that this melancholy accident had been occasioned by intemperance, but it appeared clearly in evidence before the Coroner, that the report was unfounded, and that the accident had been altogether owing to the extreme darkness of the night, and the very intricate and unprotected nature of the roads across those dreary heights.—York Courant."

Punishment of the Knout in Russia

OLEARIUS gives a description of the manner in which he saw the knout inflicted on eight men and one woman, only for selling brandy and tobacco without a license. The executioner's man, after stripping them down to the waist, tied their feet, and took one at a time on his back. The executioner stood at three paces distance with a large pizzle, to the end of which were fastened three throngs of an elk's skin untanned, with which, springing forward, whenever he struck, the blood gushed out at every blow. The men each had twenty-five or twenty-six lashes: the woman, though only sixteen, fainted away. After their backs were thus dreadfully mangled, they were tied together two and two; and those who sold tobacco having a little of it, and those who sold brandy a little bottle put about their necks; they were then whipped through the city of Petersburgh for about a mile and a half; and then brought back to the place of their first punishment and dismissed. According to M. de la Motreye, this is what is termed the moderate knout; for when the sentence orders it between the moderate and severe, the executioner takes off pieces of flesh at every stroke. It is no wonder that many die of this cruel and inhuman punishment.

THE CELLAR

By PAUL L. ANDERSON

TOM HARKNESS and I were chums in prep school and college, but as so often happens in such cases we drifted rather apart after graduation, he remaining in New York to study medicine, while I went abroad to take up art. For some time we kept up a more or less desultory correspondence, which, however, gradually languished—"faded out," as they say in the movies—for we had no real, no fundamental interests in common, and I was not even deeply stirred when he wrote me of his approaching marriage; I merely set down his enthusiasm as the characteristic raptures of "a young man married," wrote him a suitably congratulatory letter, and dismissed the whole affair.

At length, after four years in Paris and one in Rome, I returned to New York, to find that Harkness, who had specialized in psychology, was already beginning to make a name for himself as an alienist, and had—for so young a man—an excellent consulting practice. He was especially interested in various investigations into the power of suggestion, had done a good deal of experimenting along these lines, and was always ready to talk about his work, so, having looked him up and got into the way of dropping in to see him at odd times, I listened to a number of very interesting monologues on the subject. One effect of these talks, though, was that I found myself losing my sentimental affection for my old friend, for Harkness had developed into a type which is particularly distasteful to me personally—cold-blooded, unemotional scientific investigator, to whom people

are merely cases, specimens on which to work or to experiment. Further than this, I was always a little uncomfortable in his presence, for he possessed to a remarkable degree that curious psychic power—common to all leaders of men and found in the most unexpected individuals—which enables a man to impose his will on another, to control another's actions by a dominating personality. Not that Harkness was aggressive; for one so unemotional he was astonishingly gentle and considerate, but it was simply that when with him I felt a sense of helplessness—quite unallied, however, to fear—similar to that which one feels in the presence of any overwhelming power, a thunderstorm, for example. I repeat, there was no element of fear connected with this sensation; I knew he would not harm me, and my discomfort had its genesis solely in the conviction that did he choose to tell me to do anything I would be dominated by his unusual psychic strength and would be unable to refuse.

ALICE HARKNESS, though, was totally different from her husband. Meeting her for the first time, I realized that Tom had not exaggerated her attractiveness—he had rather under-stated the case. I shall not attempt any description of the girl; as well try to describe the west wind, or a June rose. It would mean nothing if I should say that she was under medium height and slim, but well proportioned, and that she had

wavy brown hair and gray eyes; there are thousands of girls whom such a description would fit, and the thing which made Alice Harkness stand out from all others was the very thing it is impossible to put into words—personal charm. I have never met anyone else, either man or woman, who possessed to so great an extent the power of making others fond of her, nor was she attractive only to men; women liked her as well, and she took as much pleasure in their company as in that of her masculine admirers, of whom there were apt to be several about the house of an evening. There was nothing of the coquette about her; she was fond of outdoor sports, brimful of vitality, and she liked people not because they were men or women, but because they were, precisely, people. Also, she owned that greatest of all Heaven-sent gifts, the temperament that is always happy—delighted with any sort of occupation, and always having a good time.

I had, of course, met many women, but never one who had interested me particularly—actually, I had reached the age of twenty-six without the faintest suggestion of a love-affair—but it was not many months before I found myself genuinely and deeply in love with the wife of my old-time friend, and it seemed to me that I could observe signs that she liked me better than any other of the men she knew. It must be admitted that Dr. Harkness was not a thoroughly satisfactory husband for a vivacious young girl; he was a very able man and a brilliant conversationist, but he was utterly absorbed in his work and gave his wife only casual attention, so during the four years of their married life the two had to some extent grown away from each other, especially since there were no children to act as a bond.

Still, one cannot honorably make love to a married woman, even though she and her husband do not get along well. Artists have a bad reputation in such matters, but it is not really deserved; there is as large a proportion of straightforward individuals among us as in any other profession, and it is the few scamps who have given us a bad name. Like anyone, I was reluctant to say good-bye to the woman I loved, and debated the matter with myself for some time in the effort to find another solution, finally coming to the only possible conclusion—that I must go away. I made my preparations to return to Paris, and went up to the Harkness house the day before sailing, to take leave. Tom was out at a consultation, so I saw only Alice, but she knew very well the reason for my going, though nothing was said of that and the conversation was most matter-of-fact—regrets, promises to write, hopes for good fortune, and so on. Longer silences then usual, perhaps; we both found it a little difficult to talk.

At last I moved toward the door and Alice rose to shake hands. As her hand touched mine a shiver ran through me, my head swam, a power stronger than my will took command of me, and I stepped close and laid my arm about her shoulders. She trembled, drew back, whispered:

"No, no, Peter! We mustn't! We mustn't!" and as I gathered strength to drop my arm and go she trembled again, drew her breath sharply, looked away from me, shivered, stepped nearer, caught my hand to her bosom, and with a sob laid her head on my shoulder. A faint perfume rose in my nostrils and I pressed her to me, laying my cheek against the soft waves of her hair. I patted her shoulder, murmuring pet names and clasping her tighter—and the door opened and Tom walked in.

HE STOPPED short on seeing us and eyed us a moment before passing on to the fireplace, where a log fire was blazing. Of course Alice and I moved apart when he entered, but we said nothing—there was nothing to say. Tom Harkness had been known in college for his sardonic speech, nor had this tendency lessened in the years he had practiced medicine, and I looked for some bitter and scathing comment, but none came. For perhaps half a minute we three stood silent, when Tom said gently:

"Sit down a minute, Peter; you too, Alice." We found chairs, but Tom stood leaning against the mantel. He lit a cigarette and turned to us again.

"I hardly expected this," he began, evenly. "Of course I've known for some time that you two were in love with each other. Having specialized in psychology I see indications that others would miss, but I confess this is a bit of a surprise to me; I didn't think it had gone quite so far."

"Tom," I answered, "you weren't mistaken; it hadn't gone this far. This is as much of a surprise to me as to you, and I think it is to Alice, also. I came up today to say good-bye; I'm sailing for Paris tomorrow, and—and—well, things rather got away from us."

Tom looked from me to Alice and back to me again, then nodded reflectively.

"I guess you're right, Peter," he said. "That explains matters. I hated to think I was that far off in my estimate of you two—I should have foreseen what would happen, though. Might happen to anyone."

"Well then, Tom, I reckon I'll trot along. It's all right, is it?"

"Of course it's all right, old man—I'm fairly well acquainted with you both! But don't be in a hurry; I have several things to say yet." He threw his cigarette into the fire, thrust his hands deep in his pockets, and settled himself squarely in front of us, then went on:

"I take it you two are really in love with each other? This isn't merely a fancy? You really feel you can't be happy apart? Life a dreary waste, and all that?"

"That's about the size of it, Tom. Damn it all, man, I'm not in the habit of kissing ladies promiscuously!"

"Nor is Alice in the habit of being promiscuously kissed. Quite so! Well, now, I've spent considerable time these past few months thinking this over, and I reckon the best scheme is for you to take her."

"'Make 'im take 'er an' keep 'er; that's 'Ell for 'em both'? Thank you, no!"

"Don't be a fool, Peter! I mean honorably, of course. Do you suppose for a minute I'd let you have her on any other terms? But there's no sense in making two people thoroughly miserable in order to afford one a doubtful pleasure that's more than half misery at best—"

"Thank you, Tom!" Alice interrupted.

"Don't be silly, Alice. You know what I mean well enough, and you know how I feel toward you. However—well, it's largely my fault, you know, so the best thing is for you to get a divorce and marry Peter; I shan't interfere—will you let me come see you once in a while?"

"Oh, Tom!" cried Alice, and I burst out:

"Tom, you certainly are a sure-enough man-sized man!"

"There, there!" he answered. "Spare me your thanks! This isn't heroism at all—merely plain, ordinary common-sense. 'Greatest good for the greatest number,' and all that. It looks big to you, having it sprung on you all of a sudden, this way, but you forget I've had time to think it over. Get along with you, Peter, and cancel your steamer reservation. Come around tomorrow and we'll talk over arrangements. Clear out now; I'm going to take an evening off and take Alice to hear *Die Meistersinger;* sorry we haven't a seat for you—still, you'll have plenty of chance to take her to concerts and operas and such.

I don't expect she'll hear much of the music tonight though—something else to think about, you know! Get along now; we've got to dress and eat dinner. 'Bye!"

BRIEFLY, then, Alice got her divorce, and she and I, after waiting a decent interval, were married, very quietly, the May after the decree was granted. I was working on a portrait commission at the time, and could not leave the city at once, so our wedding-trip was postponed until the following October, when we planned to motor through the Berkshires, up through Great Barrington, Pittsfield, North Adams, and so over the Mohawk Trail, for that country is wonderfully beautiful in autumn, and Alice had never seen it. Tom came to call several times at our studio apartment in West Twelfth street, and we talked over the route of our trip with him, he suggesting one or two slight changes, by way of improvement. He was not a frequent visitor, though there was no definite break; still we all three felt it hardly the thing for a divorced husband to be on too good terms with his former wife, and besides, his practice kept him busy most of the time. We were always glad to see him—quite apart from a more or less natural feeling of gratitude—for he was, when he chose, an excellent companion, but—well, there was just that little sense of constraint; a feeling that it wasn't just the thing.

So the summer passed, and on the second day of October Alice and I started on the deferred honeymoon, motoring up through Brewster, Pawling and Millerton, and stopping the first night at Lakeville. The next day was a gorgeous Indian Summer day, and we decided to turn off from our chosen route to run over and see some friends in Norfolk, so instead of swinging north at Canaan we went straight on through East Canaan, stopping at times for me to make sketches and color notes, with the result that we reached Norfolk only about noon. We had lunch at the Norfolk Inn, spent some hours with our friends, and started back, allowing time enough to reach Great Barrington for dinner. However, we were overtaken by a terrific thunderstorm—one of the sudden mountain storms so common in that region, though a bit unusual so late in the year—which delayed us so that I realized, soon after leaving Canaan the second time, that we would not reach Great Barrington until late and debated with myself whether it would not be better to turn back for the night rather than push on. I had the chains on and was driving carefully, for the road was very slippery, but I had about decided to turn around when a figure appeared in the glare of the headlights, standing in the middle of the road and waving its arms frantically—"like a drunken windmill," Alice remarked—and I slowed down. As the car slipped and slithered to a stop I saw the stranger to be a tall, bearded man of middle age, dressed in blue overalls and jumper, wearing a big straw hat, and having the bowed shoulders and knotted hands of a farmer. He was evidently in a state of great excitement—not altogether explained by the obvious fact that he was drenched to the skin with rain—and rushing up he spoke in the nasal tones of the rural New Englander.

"Say, Mister!" he said. "Won't you please come help me? My wife's gone an' fell down the cellar steps an' broke her leg, an' I ain't got nobody to help me git her up. There ain't no neighbors nearer n' half a mile, an' she's layin' there sufferin' awful! If you'll jist help me git her up-stairs, an' then stop in Sheffiel' as you go by an' send a docker back, I'll be right obliged. You kin drive right up the lane here, an' I'll ride on the step o' your machine."

I WAS somewhat disgusted at being held up this way, so late, but there was no refusing such an appeal, and, turning in at the gate indicated, I drove perhaps a quarter of a mile along a muddy, deeply-rutted lane, at length reaching the house. As we approached the building I saw by the light of the lamps that it was a dilapidated, ramshackle affair, badly in need of paint, the door-yard grown up with weeds, and a general air of slackness about the place. At one side of the house a sand-screen with a pile of pebbles at the foot seemed to indicate that some cement work had recently been done on the premises, but no sign of the result was visible. Still, such run-down houses are too frequent in that region to call for any special attention, and we climbed out of the car and went in, Alice remarking:

"I'll go along; perhaps I can help the poor woman while you go for the doctor."

"Thank ye, Ma'am; I take that right kindly of you," said the farmer, and taking a lamp from the table he added: "Step this way."

He led us out through the kitchen, where I noted, in a swift glance—it is my business to observe quickly—a cook-stove, an iron sink and pump, several battered chairs, and a table, the latter piled with a confusion of unwashed dishes. The floor was covered with a frayed oil-cloth, the plastered walls needed paint, and in one place a patch of plaster had fallen away, leaving the bare lath exposed. This scene photographed itself automatically on my mind, even as our guide opened the cellar door and stepped aside for us to descend. Alice gathered her skirts close about her and started down, I following, but hardly had I reached the second step before I felt—I did not know, I *felt*—that something was wrong. I started to turn, but in that instant the light disappeared, the door was slammed with a thunderous crash, and even as I threw myself against it the bolt shot home. Again and again I hurled my full weight against the door, but to no effect, and I heard a faint laugh from the other side. Below me, in the dark, Alice spoke:

"What's the matter, Peter?"

"Matter? Why, this infernal scoundrel has locked us down cellar, that's what's the matter!"

"But his wife?"

"Wife! There's no wife! It's all a fake! He's tricked us into the cellar and locked us here! By thunder, I'll make it hot for him when I get out! What I'll do to him'll make him think Hell's a refrigerator!"

"But what would he do a thing like that for?"

"Most likely to rob us—hold us for ransom, maybe. But I swear I never heard of a hold-up man in this part of the country before."

"But isn't there any way we can get out? Can't you shoot the lock off the door with your pistol?"

"I left it in the car! What a fool I am! But I never suspected anything like this!" Again I surged against the door, and grasping the knob shook it violently. Raising my voice I shouted:

"Open this door at once! Do you hear?" But no answer came save once more the faint, far-off laugh. I realized that here was something different from the usual farm-house door and called to Alice:

"Lend me your spirit-lamp a minute, Honey," and she handed it up. I turned it on and looked the door over, and my heart sank, for door and cellar-way were lined with steel, and I knew this for no chance hold-up, but a carefully planned trap.

"Let's look the place over and see if there isn't some other way out," I said, and going carefully down to the foot of the steps we examined our prison thoroughly by the light of the little flash-lamp. The cellar proved to be about thirty feet square, with floor and walls of new concrete, and was empty

of any furniture—nothing but the bare floor and walls save that in the center there rose a stone chimney some eight feet square, the rough field stones being laid in Portland cement. There were no windows, nor was there any door other than the one by which we had entered, and the ceiling, which was about eight feet high, was apparently of oak beams, laid side by side. That was all; no way of escape, no way of communicating with the outside world, no food, no water, no light—nothing. It was a perfect trap; once in, we were at the mercy of our jailer; there we would stay until he saw fit to release us. Alice looked at me and I at her, and she whimpered a little, then caught herself and, smiling bravely, said:

"Peter, I'm frightened. Just a little, I will admit."

"Don't worry, Honey; it's just a scheme to rob us, and maybe I can rush him or trick him when he brings us food. Anyway, he won't do any worse than take our money; he wouldn't dare."

"Don't think it, my friend!" said a voice behind us, and we both jumped. The voice laughed, then said:

"Right behind you," and as we swept the light of the flash-lamp around it spoke again:

"No, I'm not a ghost! Quite the contrary! I'm talking to you through a speaking-tube. Look between the stones of the chimney and you'll see a little hole there. I had the tube put in when I built this little man-trap, so I could converse with my prisoners."

"Damn you!" I cried. "You let us out, or it'll be the worse for you!"

The voice laughed again.

"My dear chap, I fear you haven't recognized me yet! My disguise must have been pretty good! Still, allowance must be made for the fact that it was dark and that you weren't expecting me; that helped, of course. But think! Whose voice does mine remind you of? Think hard—whose? 'Journeys end in lovers' meetings'! Whose?"

A moment's silence—it flashed upon us—Alice bent toward me and seized my arm.

"It's Tom!" she whispered. "*Tom Harkness!*"

"Yes, my dear," said the voice, mockingly. "You're quite right—it's Tom. Strange, how we meet again, isn't it? Really, Peter, I took you in nicely, didn't I? No, I don't mean just now; I mean the whole thing. Did you honestly think I'd let you get away with my wife so easily? 'How little you understand the sterling integrity of my character'!"

"But, Tom, what do you want me to do? How long are you going to keep us here? And what's it all for, anyway?" I was puzzled.

"Why, my dear fellow, I don't want you to do anything! There's nothing you *can* do! What for? Well, you'll find out, presently. And how long? Why, how can I tell how long you'll stay there? I'm not going to *keep* you there—I'm just going away and *leave* you there!"

I FELT Alice shudder and she leaned against me—she swayed and I put my arm around her.

"But look here, Tom," she said. "You don't mean—leave us to—to *die* here!"

"Yes, my dear," answered the mocking voice. "I do mean just exactly that!"

"But you can't do that!"

"No? Why not?"

"Why, we'll be traced—you'll be caught!"

"Caught? Listen, my dear—you too, Peter. I've been planning this little affair for months—ever since I found you two turtle-doves loving each other so charmingly, that memorable afternoon. There's no house within a mile of this, and this is five hundred yards from the road. Shout all you want to—no one can hear you. Dig all you want to—there's three feet of concrete under and around you and two feet of solid seasoned oak over your heads. Anyway, even if anyone should by any possibility hear you, you're in a highly superstitious neighborhood, and this is known as a haunted house! I bought it partly for that reason; I gave out that I was going to remodel it—and sure enough I did! Oh, no, I wasn't absurd enough to give my own name! And who'll trace you? And suppose they should trace you, what chance is there of finding you? And how long do you think you'll last, without food—or water? No, you're done! This is the end of your road—the end of your pretty dreams!"

"You infernal murderer!" I burst out. Again Harkness laughed. I went on:

"You must be mad, to plan any such devilish performance as that—leave us here—in the dark!"

"Why, Peter, do you hesitate to eliminate a mosquito that bothers you? Mad? Oh, no, I'm not mad! Not mad at all!" His voice rose to a scream. "Not mad, I tell you! No, I'm not mad!" Again he laughed, and I felt Alice shudder. When he spoke again he was quieter.

"Well, Peter—and Alice—I must leave you now. I trust you may enjoy each other's society for the next few days—not longer. No, I promise you, not longer—without water! Still, you won't be alone. You'll have company—oh, yes, company!"

Alice broke in, her voice soft and gentle.

"Tom!"

"Yes, my dear? What is it? Something I can do for you? Some last words to take down—some message to send?"

"Tom—for God's sake!"

Harkness laughed again, sardonically.

"For God's sake? Why, Alice, you astonish me! I thought you knew my views in the matter of these superstitions, these absurd notions of superhuman powers! No, my dear, 'For God's saks' means nothing—nothing at all—to me! If that's all, I'll be leaving you. So kind of you to let me take your car!"

"Tom!" I broke in. "If God means nothing to you, is honor no more than a word? Can you do this thing—torture a helpless woman?"

"Honor?" mocked Harkness. "'Who hath it? He that died o' Wednesday'! Good-bye—forever!"

ENRAGED, infuriated at his callousness, his devilish cruelty, I rushed up the stairs and shook the door furiously, hurled myself frantically against it again and again—useless! And I returned to the girl who sat on the cold floor, her face in her hands, sobbing. Presently Harkness spoke once more.

"Quite convinced, Peter? I assure you the door will withstand your most furious assaults! I have tested it thoroughly—a much stronger man than yourself, my dear fellow! Tremendous endurance he had, too—quite remarkable vitality—! However, you're welcome to try all you like—but I would advise against it; violent exercise makes one perspire, and one grows thirsty. Good-bye. Good-bye, Alice. Too bad you couldn't have been faithful to me!"

Faintly we heard his footsteps as he moved about the house, the front door slammed—silence!

Alice flung herself into my arms and clung to me.

"Peter!" she said. "It's incredible! It can't be true! We must be dreaming it!"

"I'm afraid it's true, Honey! Maybe, though, he's just trying to frighten us. One of his blasted psychological experiments, perhaps."

"Oh, Peter, that must be it! He'll come back and let us out! He's just playing a joke on us!"

"That's probably it, Honey. He'll most likely just keep us here over night,

and come in the morning and let us out. Let's just sit down here and take it easy." But in my heart I knew I was not telling the truth—I knew there was no hope—but it would not do to let Alice know!

We talked for a time, then lay down on the cold, hard floor, Alice's head pillowed on my shoulder, and presently I knew by her breathing that she was asleep, exhausted by her emotions. Long I lay peering into the utter, impenetrable dark, cursing to myself the fiend who could so torture a woman—the woman who had lain in his arms, the woman he had once loved—till at length I, too, lost consciousness.

How long I may have slept, I cannot say, but after a time I woke, chilled and aching. I tried to lie still, but my shoulder pained from the weight of Alice's head, and I must have stirred, for the girl woke with a start and flung her arms around me.

"Oh, Peter! Peter!" she cried. "Oh, I had such a terrible dream! I dreamt we were—oh, Peter, make me wake up! Oh, Peter—oh, God, it wasn't a dream!" and she burst into terrified sobs, trembling, shuddering, from head to foot.

I soothed her as best I could, and presently she grew quiet, and lay still in my arms for a long time—perhaps an hour. Then she spoke again.

"Peter, does it hurt very much to starve?"

"No, Honey," I answered. "Why?"

"I have a large ache in my stomach, and I thought—"

"Yes, Dear, it's hunger; I have it, too. But it won't get any worse, and it won't last long; it just lasts a little while, and then there isn't any more pain—just progressive weakening; you just get weaker until—the end. It's really the most comfortable way; not bad at all."

"Peter, I'm thirsty, too."

"Yes, Honey; that's the worst part of it. We may be rather uncomfortable, if Tom doesn't let us out pretty soon."

"Do you honestly think he will?"

"Yes, I honestly do." But she caught a false note in my voice, for she cried instantly:

"Peter! You're not telling me the truth! Why, Sweetheart, you don't think I'm afraid to go, do you? Not when I know what's coming!" And I could not answer.

By and by she spoke again:

"Listen, Peter! The ceiling of this place is wood, and you have a knife in your pocket. Don't you believe you could cut a hole and let us out?"

Two feet of seasoned oak, and a pocket-knife! However, it would encourage her to have me try, and I said:

"Well, I'll have a shot at it, anyway; maybe we can make a go of it."

SO I searched and found a place where I could climb the rough stones of the chimney and reach the ceiling, and, holding by one hand, attacked the beams. Luckily the knife was sharp and of good steel, but it went slowly, oh, so slowly! A chip at a time—my hands were blistered, my arms ached from the strained position, and I knew well that long before I had got through we would have succumbed to thirst, the thirst that was already beginning to torment me. Still, to be doing something was a help, to be making an effort, not to be giving up—snap! The blade broke under my hand. I dropped to the floor to rest, and by and by took up the work again with the other blade of the knife, Alice holding the flash-lamp for me to see. At length, utterly exhausted, I gave over and examined what I had done—a scratch! A foot long, half an inch wide, quarter of an inch deep! The task was hopeless. I lay down on the floor and Alice sat beside me.

And now for the first I began to feel the terror of the dark. It seemed an actual, a material thing, a Presence, weighing me down, pressing on me, holding me helpless in its grip. And Alice felt it too, for she turned on the light. Its little ray seemed instantly to lift a weight off my chest—I could bear anything did it only come in the light! But in a few moments she turned it off, saying:

"We must save it to work by." And again the weight settled on me—and on her as well; I could hear her panting, gasping, as if for breath in a stifling air. So we lay in the dark and the silence—not a ray of light, not a sound but our labored breathing, and slowly, gradually, but inevitably—relentless, overwhelming—the horror grew—heavier, closer, more terrible—something touched my foot, and my nerves gave way—I jumped—it ran across our feet, and Alice screamed aloud. Again and again she screamed and the walls gave back the sound, multiplied, horrible, heartrending. I groped for the light and our hands met—she tore her hand away, screaming louder and louder—I flashed on the light and she flung her arms around my neck, her screams died to a moan, and at length she asked:

"Oh, Peter, what was it?" I swept the light about the cellar, we saw a great gray rat, and Alice shuddered, then grew quieter, and said:

"Heaven knows a rat is bad enough, but when I didn't know what it was—Peter, forgive me for being such a fool!"

"It's all right, Honey; your nerves are a little upset, that's all. The beastly thing made me jump, too."

"Look here, Peter," she cried, excitedly, "do you suppose it came in from outside? Maybe we can find where, and have that much start on getting out! Let's look!" So, taking the flash-lamp, we went carefully over the cellar again, but found no least crevice or cranny that led to the outer air, save only the small hole of the speaking-tube—and Harkness had carefully stuffed the upper end of the tube before he left—to take away our smallest chance of being heard!

So we gave over the futile search and sat down, shoulder to shoulder, Alice's hand in mine. By and by she said, in a half-whisper:

"Peter!"

"Yes, Dear?"

"Peter, if that rat didn't come in from outside, Tom must have put him here—to make it worse for us!"

"I guess you're right," I answered. "That's what he meant by company."

"Ugh!" she whispered. "Horrible—Torquemada! Peter, the poor thing is as badly off as we are!"

"Just about." Silence for a few minutes, and then:

"Peter?"

"Yes, Honey."

"Do you suppose—after we're gone—the rat will—he will—?"

"I'm afraid so."

"Oh, horrible! Horrible! Peter, I don't so much mind dying—everyone has to die some time, and it's not so bad, with you—only I wish you didn't have to—but to be eaten—by a rat! don't you suppose we could catch him?"

"We can try, at all events."

THEN began a mad hunt, the maddest scene ever enacted since the world began, for round and round the cellar we two, doomed man and woman, hunted the loathsome beast, by the feeble light of the little lamp. Round and round, back and forth, tiptoeing, racing madly, heading him off, chasing furiously, till at length we gave over, exhausted—he was too agile—we could not catch him—and we sank on the floor to rest. Alice burst into hysterical laughter, more horrible than her screams. She laughed and sobbed and rocked back and forth, laughed again and sobbed and choked on her laughter. It was long before I could quiet her, but at length she fell asleep in my arms—and I, too, slept.

Again we woke to utter dark and silence. We may have slept for minutes

(Continued on page 182)

IN THE WEIRD LIGHT

By EDWARD EVERETT WRIGHT *and* RALPH HOWARD WRIGHT

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting,
The soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting
And cometh from afar."
—*Wordsworth.*

"But tell, O restless main!
Who are the dwellers in the world beneath,
That thus the watery realm cannot contain
The joy they breathe.

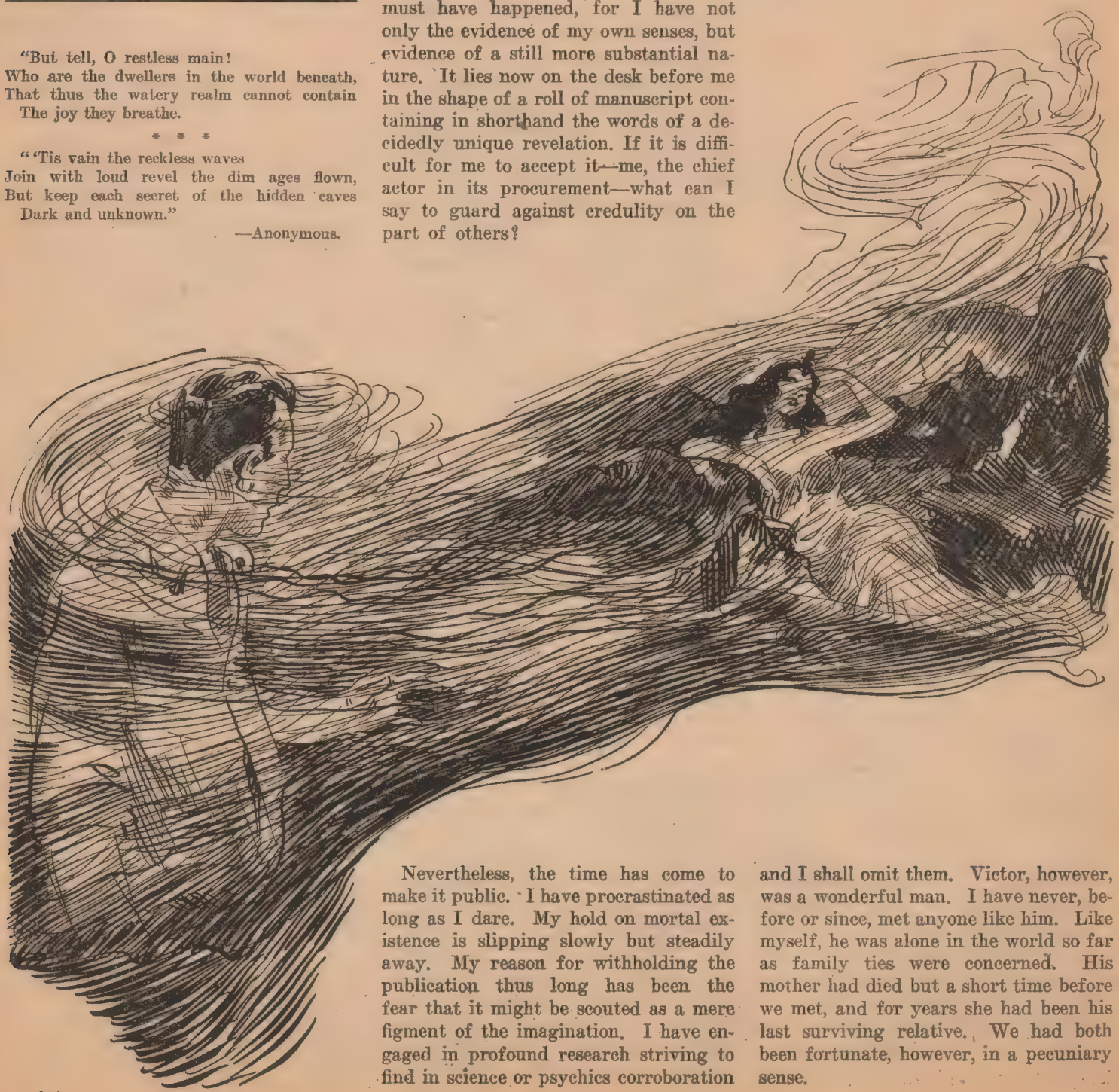
* * *

"'Tis vain the reckless waves
Join with loud revel the dim ages flown,
But keep each secret of the hidden caves
Dark and unknown."
—Anonymous.

CAVERN OF LIGHTNINGS.

CHAPTER I.

WHETHER it really happened, or whether it was a dream—partly vivid and partly confused—I have asked myself a thousand times during the past two years. But why? It must have happened, for I have not only the evidence of my own senses, but evidence of a still more substantial nature. It lies now on the desk before me in the shape of a roll of manuscript containing in shorthand the words of a decidedly unique revelation. If it is difficult for me to accept it—me, the chief actor in its procurement—what can I say to guard against credulity on the part of others?



Nevertheless, the time has come to make it public. I have procrastinated as long as I dare. My hold on mortal existence is slipping slowly but steadily away. My reason for withholding the publication thus long has been the fear that it might be scouted as a mere figment of the imagination. I have engaged in profound research striving to find in science or psychics corroboration of some of the statements therein set forth, but in vain. The world may judge of its merits.

Permit me to introduce him who was at one time my most intimate friend and companion—Victor. Surnames will be of no consequence in this connection, and I shall omit them. Victor, however, was a wonderful man. I have never, before or since, met anyone like him. Like myself, he was alone in the world so far as family ties were concerned. His mother had died but a short time before we met, and for years she had been his last surviving relative. We had both been fortunate, however, in a pecuniary sense.

We met at college where our kindred tastes, and lack of other friends, had drawn us together. His was a stronger and more forceful character than mine.

He led me where otherwise I should not have gone. Fond of philosophy he permitted himself to grope to the profoundest depths of thought without fear of the consequences, whence I would follow hesitatingly so far as I was able, but never could penetrate to the points reached by him.

His personality was agreeable and prepossessing to a degree. Tall, well-formed, and graceful, with noble air and commanding mien, people were wont to pause and look back at him when he passed. But that which caused his face to glow with unusual radiance I believe to have been his purity of character. His soul was above an ignoble thought. Religion was his favorite study. He regarded it as the topmost pinnacle of all research. His demeanor was such that not even the remotest stranger would dare voice an impure expression in his presence.

I believe it was largely owing to this intense purity in which his mind habitually dwelt that he could bring himself into closer communication with the unseen than can the ordinary mortal. He said at one time that he believed he was destined to receive a greater knowledge of the truth than is ordinarily vouchsafed to members of the human family.

On one occasion, when our investigations had led us to London, we met in the rooms of a philosophical society a young woman of a most interesting type. Her appearance was positively ethereal. A bewitching figure, with blue eyes and golden hair, her skin was so transparent, her voice so sweet, and her smile so radiant, that one could scarce believe oneself addressing an earthly creature, when in conversation with her. I heard her called Athalie, but learned nothing further as to her name or history. But I took advantage of every opportunity to bask in the eloquence of her speech. Athalie proved to be a student like Victor. I must admit that I never met two persons whose mental tastes were more on the same plane than were theirs. They became so profoundly interested in one another that I took a second place to each in the other's estimation. This I did not resent, as I was less interested than they in their favorite topics, so frequently strolled away, leaving them together.

At length we decided to return to New York. For several days prior to our departure from London, we had not seen Athalie, and were compelled to start for the steamship without bidding her goodbye. Her address was unknown to us.

It was not until we were well out at sea that I was startled at meeting Athalie walking alone on the deck of our great steamer. She seemed surprised, as well as pleased. Asked how she happened on board, she explained that she had been seized with an uncontrollable impulse to visit America. She had, therefore made immediate preparations and thus been enabled to catch the celebrated boat which was making her maiden trip. She had no previous knowledge of our being on the steamer. Knowing Victor's attainments in the art of telepathy, I was not at a loss to account for her presence.

Our companionship, however, was destined to be of short duration, so far as I alone of we three was concerned. On a memorable Sunday night the ill-fated steamer collided with an iceberg, and sank. The harrowing story in all its awful details has been heralded throughout Christendom. I shall, therefore, confine my remarks to our own experiences. Victor and Athalie were successful, at the last moment, in getting into a boat—a collapsible boat—alone together. Victor had expended his strength and energy in saving others. It was our intention that the three of us should take this boat. On account of Victor's exhausted condition, I prevailed on him to go next after Athalie, by absolutely refusing to move until he did so. For Athalie's sake he complied, thinking I still would have ample time to join them. But a sudden lurch of the steamer, as it plunged downward, thrust the boat away, and a few moments later, I was struggling in the water. In a drowning condition I was pulled by a strong hand into a boat, and resuscitated. But it was not the boat of Victor and Athalie.

When we were rescued by a steamer on the following morning, they were not among those who had been taken on board. I feared the worst. When we reached Halifax, I elected to remain there for a time. I could not bear the thought of coming on to New York alone. I devoured every item of the news in regard to the disaster in the hope of learning something of Victor and Athalie, but in vain. Their collapsible boat must have followed the steamer to the bottom of the sea. That was the gist of my conclusions.

As a result of my sufferings I was seized with a violent fever, during which, in delirium, I constantly saw Victor and Athalie in their frail boat tossing on the waves of a tempestuous sea. During my convalescence, when I became able to go about, I would walk up and down on the sands of the seashore, thinking of my lost chum and his fair companion.

Finally I was seized with an impulse. From former experiences I judged it to be a call from Victor. A steamer was about to sail for Norway, and I could not refrain from taking passage thereon. For what purpose, I knew not. On landing at Halifax, prior to my illness, I had arranged my financial affairs by correspondence, so that all I had to do was to satisfy my whim, which I did. On reaching Christiania, I concluded to transfer to a steamer that was to traverse the coast northward to Bergen and Molde.

One who has taken this trip is always prone to dwell on the peculiar beauty of Norwegian scenery. I am no exception to the rule. I must mention Mount Hornelon that rises perpendicularly from the edge of the water to a height of nearly three thousand feet, under the overhanging projections of which our vessel was compelled to pass on the way from Bergen to Molde; the dangerous Stadt, where there is no protecting bulwark of islands to guard against the wild tossings of a restless ocean; and the little city of Molde, in its bewildering beauty, which reminds one so much of fairyland that it is difficult to conceive of its situation in so northerly a latitude. It lies nestled in the heart of romantic and picturesque surroundings, looking outward on the green islands across the channel on the one hand, on another reflected in the transparent fjord that lies beneath it, while the lofty range of the Romsdalfjaelde, with its many snow-capped peaks, almost surrounds the remainder of the town.

Landing at Molde, I went ashore and procured lodging. Here I again became ill. I was told afterward that my life had been despaired of for a time. As at Halifax, when I grew better, I would walk out alone, but for some unaccountable reason, when I reached my hotel, which I always succeeded in doing, I never could remember exactly where I had been. As I always returned sooner or later, my absence was not noted, and sometimes I would wander about for two or three days.

Finally an occasion came when I ventured farther than usual. I seemed to have no prompting to return. I proceeded overland to a tremendous fjord, and seem to have a distinct recollection of coming to a mountain where I saw lightnings flashing from the mouth of a cavern far up in the rock. It occurred to me that I must reach the opening from whence those lightnings issued. At first the idea seemed a mad one, as it had

the appearance of being inaccessible. After many trials and difficulties, however, lasting possibly for several days—my mind was in no condition to note time—I found myself at the coveted point. One thing is certain: I have no recollection of having seen a single person during my endeavors to reach the place. I was high up, on the side of a rugged mountain from the cavernous recesses of which issued the fires I had seen. I retained a sense of having struggled to get there; at the same time, however, I felt that I might have been partially aided to it by an unseen power. I stood on a narrow ledge of rock projecting out from a terrible precipice. The surface of the ledge was scorched and blackened. I could assign no other reason for it than its frequent contact with the mysterious fires that had probably passed over it for ages. This caused me to feel somewhat nervous, and a little dubious as to the effect the lightnings might have on me if I should come in direct contact with them.

Notwithstanding my misgivings, I faced about and entered the cavern, when I was startled violently at hearing a human voice.

"So you have come at last in answer to my calling! Permit me to congratulate you on your perseverance and ultimate success."

It was Victor's voice, and so clear and distinct were the words that I fully expected to see him standing somewhere near me.

As if my thoughts had been divined, the next words were: "We shall not be able to see each other. A hundred miles of subterranean passageway lies between us, and it cannot be traversed. But so long as the wind is from the east, we can hear each other with perfect distinctness. It is Victor who speaks to you."

"I recognize your voice," I replied, "but where are you?"

"Your question implies too much to admit of a direct answer, but the information you seek shall be unfolded gradually. Stenography was formerly one of your accomplishments. If you are still in practice it will assist you greatly now. When I am ready to relate the entire story in sequence, I should advise your taking shorthand notes of my words. But first let us indulge in a social chat. I presume you recollect the circumstances of our separation?"

"I shall never forget them," I assured him.

"Athalie is at this moment standing beside me. She will be pleased to greet you."

"How-do-you-do?"

I recognized the same sweet silvery voice I had heard for the first time in London.

"I am quite well, I thank you," I replied, "considering the ordeal through which I have passed in trying to get here."

"I have no doubt you encountered many obstacles, but if you could know how glad we are to hear your voice once more, I am sure you would never regret it. You will realize my meaning fullly when I tell you that yours and our own are the only mortal human voices Victor and I shall ever hear again. We hear other voices in the same manner that Socrates, St. Paul, and Joan of Arc heard them."

"I am astounded!" I replied. "I cannot possibly comprehend your situation."

"Victor will explain," she answered.

Here Victor again began speaking.

"The sounds of our voices are conveyed to one another by means of escaping electricity on the same principle that the telephone transmits sound along the wire. When a fusion occurs you will be unable to hear me. These fusions are the result of a contact of the escaping electricity with the atmosphere at the mouth of the cavern. Whenever they meet in undue proportions this is bound to occur. The flames you see will not injure you if you keep clear of the center of the cavern. But the reverberations that accompany them will be so deafening that you will be unable to distinguish my words. At such times I shall stop, and you will be compelled to wait until I begin again. When you are fully prepared to receive it, I shall begin a communication which you have my consent to publish, and which, believe me, will prove to be the most wonderful revelation, concerning the hereafter, that has ever been received by mortal man. Words are inadequate to express my gratification at the privilege thus afforded me of communicating this information to my fellow-mortals."

After some further conversation relative to the best method of procedure, I seated myself on a gently reclining bank of earth where I was amply protected from the flames as they passed through the cavern. Here I could write easily whether in a sitting or reclining posture, and here, with pencil and notebook my invariable companions I took, as it were, from Victor's own lips, the message that he desired to communicate and which I certainly desired to receive. There were frequent interruptions, and sometimes Athalie and he would converse with me during prolonged intervals. I have no idea of the time the work consumed. I experienced no hunger until I emerged from the cavern after the work had been completed. I then relapsed into my former condition during which I wandered about until I found myself again in my rooms in the hotel at Molde, where I was informed that I had been absent nearly a month, and that searching parties had been organized to seek for me. They had failed to find me, however, and I am sure that, if left to my own devices, I could never start out from Molde again and find the place where I received the communication. Apart from a vague recollection of having wandered, the details of my journey to and from the place have been completely blotted from my memory, while all that happened when I was actually in the cavern remains distinct in my mind.

In my research amongst scientific works since, I happened on the following:

"A very strange phenomenon, as yet unexplained, is the appearance of those lightnings that dart from time to time from certain caverns in the Norwegian coast."

When I read this, it thrilled me with joy unspeakable, because, to a certain extent it substantiates my memory of the experience. But nothing in the realm of scientific progress would serve to throw a ray of light in a direction that might tend to substantiate the subject matter of the communication.

The following, with the exceptions of divisions, which I have taken the liberty to make and arrange systematically, and the poetical selections, which I have considered appropriate for the headings of chapters, is a verbatim record of the message as it was conveyed to my ears from the bowels of the earth through the medium of electricity. When this is read, I shall have passed away. My identity need not be made manifest. I have no theories to propound—no opinions to express. Each may judge for himself.

CHAPTER II

A VOICE FROM THE THRESHOLD

The Present: The Tie That Binds.

"I saw Eternity the other night,
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,
All calm as it was bright;—
And round beneath it, Time, in hours, days, years,
Driven by the spheres,
Like a vast shadow moved, in which the world
And all her train were hurled."

—*H. Vaughan.*

WHEN separated from you by the sudden plunge of the steamer, our boat was given an impetus that sent it entirely outside of the circle of craft that

clustered about the scene of the disaster. Being sent in the direction in which the regular waves of the sea were rolling, it was carried on and on. It had either been robbed of oars, or left unprovided, and we were, therefore, powerless to row or manage the frail vessel. It drifted either with wind or tide—whichever happened to be the stronger. When morning dawned nothing was to be seen but water, and floating icebergs. No trace of a vessel of any kind was in sight. At first, whenever we were caught in the trough of the sea, I thought we would surely capsize, but the boat seemed of that peculiar construction which always enabled it to lift itself out right side up. We soon became fearless of any such result and devoted our time to watching and praying, in the hope that some vessel might appear. Neither of us feared death, but felt that our life's work was not yet finished, and we both possessed the utmost faith in prayer. Our confidence has been rewarded better than we dared hope.

After drifting about for several days, during which we suffered more from cold than from hunger and thirst, the sea became exceedingly rough and stormy. About the middle of one day a gloom gathered about us, growing more intense each moment. Suddenly we distinguished a roaring sound above that of the sea, and saw a water spout approaching. It was one of those ocean tornadoes, and bore directly down upon us. As it approached, and we realized that our seizure within it was inevitable, Athalie threw her arms about me. The next moment we were overwhelmed, and I clasped her to my breast. We were lifted bodily from the boat, and drawn upward into the very center of the seething mass of whirling waters. I remember a dizziness, a nauseous sensation, and a tingling like that produced by an electric battery pervading my frame; then I lost consciousness.

How long I remained in that state I know not, but I was awakened by a noise resembling the roaring of waters. Opening my eyes with an effort, I could at first see nothing save a pale, blue light, dancing and glimmering in whatever direction I looked. By the aid of the curious light I finally distinguished the form of Athalie seated at some distance on a slight elevation. The roaring which had awakened me continued, and seemed to be overhead.

"Where are we, and how came we here?" I asked.

"I do not know where we are," she answered, quietly, "but according to my recollection, we were brought here by a water spout that took us up out of the sea."

Athalie had recovered consciousness an hour or two before, and was already recalling the immediate past. I soon remembered what had happened on the sea, but was at a total loss to account for our surroundings. We were evidently at the end of a cavern, and the continual roaring and lashing of waters that dinned in our ears indicated that the partition between the cavern and the body of water, whatever it might be, must be very thin. We could not see the other end of the cavern, but looking in the direction which we thought ought to lead to it, we observed that it was lighter than immediately about us. Suspecting that it came from an opening or outlet at the side or top of the cavern, we started to find it. Having traversed the cavern as far again as we supposed would be necessary, the light appeared to be as distant as ever, while the light about us retained the same bluish, wavering appearance that we had first seen. But knowing that it was useless to return to our first starting point, we continued to go forward, believing that the cavern must have an end somewhere, and hoping that we might ultimately find it, thereby effecting our escape. We perceived that our steps were tending downward, which did not impress us very favorably as to outlets. We observed, however, that the roaring grew fainter.

As we were proceeding onward we were suddenly enveloped in thick, black darkness. This circumstance led us to believe that we had passed beyond the opening through which the light must have been admitted, and that, by turning a corner, or rounding a curve, it had been shut from view.

We started to retrace our footsteps, but found ourselves unequal to the task. We were simultaneously overwhelmed with hunger and fatigue, though this was the first time that we had felt the need either of food or rest since awakening to consciousness. I fell asleep, and how long I slept, I cannot tell, but when I was awakened the pale, blue glimmering light again surrounded me. The sensations of hunger and fatigue had vanished. Looking on the opposite side of the cavern, I beheld Athalie lying with folded hands, still sleeping soundly. As I stood gazing upon her, she stirred and opened her eyes.

"Are you still faint and weary?" I asked, anxious to know whether her sensations corresponded to mine.

"Not at all," she answered. "I wonder," she continued, "if this strange light is sustaining?"

I had begun to think with her that it must be endowed with peculiar properties. It was also evident that the light was not admitted from without, for we were still at the place where we had been when the darkness had overtaken us. It was clear that our only hope was to follow the lighted cavern as we had been doing.

As we went on we perceived that the cavern was sometimes narrow, sometimes wide; occasionally low, and frequently very high, but ever of a downward tendency, and always large enough to admit of our walking abreast and upright. Twice more the light vanished and left us in awful darkness, and overpowered with the sensations of hunger, thirst and fatigue. Each time it threw us into a stupor that caused us to sleep, and when we were awakened the cheerful and sustaining light had returned.

Finally, after traveling what seemed an interminably long distance, our progress was suddenly checked by coming upon an opening at our very feet, beneath which the brightness was far more intense and beautiful than that which had hitherto surrounded us. We supposed it must be the fountain head of the light, or the receptacle from which it had been emitted. I knelt and peered into the strange apartment, which had the appearance of being without limit, and in which various colored rays and streaks of light constantly mingled and intermingled, ever varying and changing like an aurora borealis. I half suspected that we were on the verge of the molten interior of the earth, but felt no heat.

On attempting to rise from my kneeling position, an inadvertent movement precipitated me forward into the yawning pit beneath. Although this was an occasion for fright, I felt no fear, and was amazed at the gentle manner of my descent. It seemed as though the fall were checked by an invisible resistance, and in a short time ceased, leaving me standing upright beside Athalie, who had fallen at the same time. She had seized me in an attempt to save me, but had been dragged into the opening as I fell.

We gazed at one another in astonishment.

Looking around, we found that we were in a great circular cavern which was filled with that strange intermingling radiance that we had observed from marble, and the light beautifully reflected in them. This was what had deceived me when looking in from above, as these reflections had given the bottom the appearance of a sea of light without limit. The opening through which we

had fallen appeared above us like a semi-circular window.

After contemplating this wonderful and spacious cavern for sometime, we began to speculate as to what course to pursue further. The apartment seemed to have no visible limit as a passageway. We started to walk along the smooth glassy way, not knowing in what direction we were going, but had not gone far when a spectacle presented itself that caused us to recoil.

Two human bodies were lying near the center of the cavern just in front of us. They were the bodies of a man and woman lying side by side, arrayed in curious but seemingly elegant apparel. The man was large, well proportioned and strongly built, of fair complexion and Caucasian features; the forehead was high, and of an intellectual cast; the countenance calm and peaceful, and a long, glowing beard covered his breast. The woman, also resembling the Caucasians, was very fair, queenly in form, and beautiful in countenance.

For a long time we pondered upon this spectacle in silence, for we knew not whether we were in the presence of the dead or sleeping but as they were apparently motionless with no indication of breathing, I at last summoned courage, and grew bold enough to stoop and touch the man on the cheek, which I found to be cold and rigid, but at that moment I was startled by hearing a masculine voice speak the following words:

"Mortal, disturb not the sanctity of the dead. That body has lain there all but one of a hundred thousand years, and this is the first time that mortal eyes have looked upon, or mortal hand touched it."

At the first sound of his voice I had risen, and found that we were confronted by a man and woman, who in form and feature were the exact counterparts of the inanimate bodies that lay at our feet.

Notwithstanding the tone in which he spoke, they both smiled, and seemed to entertain none but kindly intentions towards us.

"You have nothing to fear from us," spoke the woman in a reassuring tone.

At this Athalie advanced to meet the woman, exclaiming, "Oh, how glad I am to meet once more with one of my own sex, and with people who speak our own language! Can you tell us how to escape from this terrible place?"

Suddenly, however, she fell back in amazement. She had approached the woman, and attempted to clasp her hand, but in seizing it, as she thought, had touched nothing but empty space.

"Be not alarmed," said the woman kindly. "Were I as you are, and as I once was, or were you as I am now, you could take my hand. The substance of which all life is composed is ethereal to the touch of mortals. As for language, all the language that now exists or has existed in the last thousand centuries on earth, it would be all the same to us. We knew you to be English-speaking for we heard you conversing as you came towards us."

Her manner was so reassuring that Athalie without hesitation, related our adventure in full, beginning with the disaster, and ending where we stood.

"Your experience has been a strange one. It admits, however, of scientific explanation," said the woman, when Athalie had finished. "You have come here by way of the Maelstrom, off the coast of what is now called Norway. You would be loth to believe that you were plunged headlong into that terrible abyss of seething and raging waters, and lived; but you were, and you passed from the surface to the very bottom of the ocean through the Maelstrom, and by the power of the electricity emanating from the current that fills this passageway in which we now stand, you were drawn into the beginning of the branch of this cavern. It is the action of the electricity seeking an outlet that gives rise to the Maelstrom. Were it upon dry land, flashes of lightning would be seen issuing from that cavern, but as it opens in the midst of waters, it causes that tremendous commotion for which the Maelstrom is noted and feared throughout the earth."

"I have read the legend," said Athalie, "of a youth diving into the Maelstrom after a golden goblet, which if he would obtain, he was promised the hand of the king's daughter in marriage. He never rose to the surface. If this be true, would he be in this cavern?"

"No," replied the woman. "He was drowned. So would you have been had you not been brought in a tornado. It was that which saved you. When caught up in it, you were by some rare and peculiar freak of nature bundled into the midst of the ball or mass of electricity and magnetism which forms the center of the storm, and held there within its environs as securely as if encased in a hollow ball with a metal shell, and as invulnerable to the action of the other elements; cold could not chill, nor heat overcome, nor waters drown you. You were separated from them by the electricity that surrounded you, and were as inanimate human forms hermetically sealed.

"Yours is the only instance wherein human beings or any other objects ever entered into that cyclonic center. The force that emanates therefrom, owing to the whirling motion, usually repels rather than attracts, it being a reverse form of the current, and it is the force emanating from this central globe that gives the cyclone its terrific power. It was therefore a curious freak of nature that thus entangled you, and a very fortunate one for you, else your lives would have been lost. You must have been caught into it quickly, else your clothes would have been stripped from your persons; it was the manner in which the current struck you that prevented such a result."

"I wonder how we happened to be plunged into the Maelstrom," remarked Athalie.

"The water spout that caught you up in it from the sea is the counterpart of a tornado which catches up people and objects on the land. You were evidently not far from the Maelstrom when overtaken by the water spout which was moving toward it, attracted by the properties of the current with which you are now surrounded. When it reached a point directly over the Maelstrom, the electric ball in its center, encasing you, as I have explained, attracted by the kindred current here, seeking an outlet, was drawn downward into and through the waters, and into the cavern that lies beneath, where you were safely deposited. Then the mass that formed the ball containing you, separated, to commingle with its kindred element that filled the cavern."

"Why do not the waters pour into the cavern," I asked, "if we could come through them into it?"

"Because," answered the man, "the power of the electricity at the cavern prevents them, and that is why they forever whirl and seethe and boil above it."

"What was the meaning," I asked, "of the darkness that enveloped us several times on our way through the cavern?"

"Those were lulls in the passage of the current," he replied. "Sometimes the force with which it emanates from here is not sufficient to carry it to the end. The current lights the passageway, and when it failed to reach you, darkness fell upon you."

"Is there a lull in the waters of the Maelstrom at such times?" I asked.

"Waters in such wild commotion," he answered, "cannot stop at once. Before time is given for that, the current reaches them again, and so they boil on forever."

"May I inquire your names?" asked Athalie.

"As mortals," she answered, "his name was Arlo, mine Mera; they may sound strange to you, but you must remember that that was many centuries ago, as you are accustomed to reckon time."

They talked so much like people we had always known, that I had almost forgotten that they had been discriminating between themselves and mortals. In fact, I believed that I was asleep and dreaming. In order to make sure I made bold to ask if we were not dreaming.

"Not at all," was Arlo's quick reply. "You are in the midst of realities, but such realities as no mortals except ourselves have hitherto been permitted to experience."

"And what was your experience?" asked Athalie, addressing the woman.

"It occurred a long time ago," was the answer. "A hundred thousand years will scarce cover the period, when we two passed through a parallel adventure."

Athalie and I exchanged significant glances of amazement.

"You may regard it as strange," proceeded the woman, who had observed us. "Nevertheless, all I say is strictly true. We were husband and wife as mortals; we still remain husband and wife, though immortal.

"My father was a retired capitalist in his time, and lived in one of the large cities, the ruins of which are still to be seen in portions of the countries now known as Mexico and Central America. A bayou now covers the spot where that palace stood on what is now termed the peninsula of Yucatan. My father's palace had a curious phenomenon connected with it. People of those days were not so superstitious about those things as mortals of earth now are and have been for the past several centuries. When the excavation for the underground apartments of the palace was made, the workmen accidentally discovered an opening in the earth, from which at night a blue, wavering light was emitted, and would rise flickering and glimmering, frequently continuing all night long. An attempt was made to shut it out by walling up the opening, but the light still continued to rise between the stone blocks with which the underground apartments were laid, and would frequently fill every room in the building at night, causing it to appear from the outside as if illuminated; but though phenomenal, it was attributed by the people to natural or scientific causes.

"I was married to Arlo clandestinely, because my father disliked him, and I remained at home afterwards. The fact of our marriage was discovered, and I was forbidden to leave the house. Arlo came after me, and I was compelled to secrete him in one of the underground apartments. A servant betrayed his hiding place, and I flew to warn him, fearing that he might be murdered. As I reached him, the blue light began to mount from the floor, reminding me of the excavation. I told Arlo, and being a strong man, he hastily pried up the stone blocks and sprang into the cavern beneath. I saw my father descending in terrible wrath, and through fear I also leaped into the opening.

"I fell only a short distance, and by the dim light followed the course of the cavern and soon overtook Arlo, who was waiting for me, believing that I would follow.

"We remained there a long time, and then stole cautiously back, only to find that the opening had been filled in and walled up with heavy masonry, fastening us in what the perpetrators had probably thought would prove a living grave. We made no effort to remove the obstruction, but turned and followed the lighted cavern, and from that time on our experience was a similar one to that you have detailed as your own, from the time you awoke to consciousness after having been plunged through the Maelstrom. Although we came through a different cavern, it was similar to the one you have described in every detail."

I was glad to meet these people, or rather souls, for several reasons. You remember my passion for Mexican antiquities, and that it was my intention to visit Mexico and Central America. Much more satisfactory it has proven to meet souls of the very persons who once inhabited those populous and prosperous cities of ancient times, for they gave me information that far exceeded all I might have learned by visiting the ruins.

"And what has been your experience since that you have detailed?" I ventured to inquire.

I addressed myself to Mera, but was answered by Arlo.

"That would make a long story," he began, "covering a period as we have told you, of more than a hundred thousand years. I presume that seems to you like a long time. My body has lain there just as you now behold it for ninety-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine years. I was twenty-five years of age when we came here as mortals, and was disembodied at the age of seventy, thus making the length of time that has intervened since coming here a hundred thousand and forty-four years, and one hundred thousand and sixty-nine years since my birth.

"Mera's corpse has lain there as long, less seven years, she having been eighteen at the time of the incident that brought us here. She also died at the age of seventy, which was seven years after my death. During the remainder of her life after my death we were parted only as you and we are now parted—a separation of the mortal from the immortal—but we could see each other and talk together as you and we can talk. When she knew her hour had come, she came to my corpse and placed herself there in the position you see, that our mortal remains might lie together undisturbed as long as earth might last."

"And we are really conversing with spirits?" I remarked interrogatively.

"We are disembodied souls," returned Arlo. "we prefer the word 'soul,' as it implies the surviving personality of the human being. 'Spirit' has so many meanings; 'soul,' only one."

To alternate our glances from one to the other—the dead bodies and the ethereal beings standing over them—we could see no reason for disbelieving their statements, in so far at least as resemblance was concerned. Still we were considerably puzzled and mystified.

"And were those bodies embalmed, that they should be preserved for such an enormous length of time?" I inquired.

"Embalmed? No"; was the reply, "except by the properties of the current with which they are surrounded, and that will preserve them forever."

"And why are we able to see you now, when prior to coming here, such an experience was never vouchsafed to us?"

"Being surrounded by the ethereal atmosphere in which only ethereal beings are supposed to dwell, the properties of the current enable your vision to pierce it equally with that of immortals! But it is your soul that sees us. Not the organs of your body."

When seeking information Athalie was inclined to be outspoken.

"What do you mean by this current?" she inquired.

"It is the tie that binds the heavenly bodies—the suns and planets of the universe," replied Mera gently. She usually answered Athalie's inquiries as Arlo did mine. "It enters the earth," she went on, "at the South Pole, and at a distance of a hundred miles beneath the surface, divides into two streams. These pass around the center of the earth in opposite directions, always approximating a distance of a hundred

miles below the surface, sea level being the standard. They unite again at the northern end of the earth's axis, at the same distance beneath the surface, where the current has its exit into space through an opening similar to that by which it enters at the southern end."

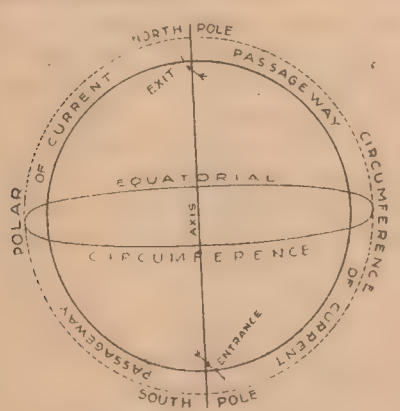
"Then is the entrance directly at the South Pole, and the exit directly at the North Pole?" I asked.

"No," answered Arlo. "The opening is at a considerable distance from the pole in each case. They are somewhere within a line drawn from the magnetic center to the pole. They are not likely to be discovered by explorers unless an expedition should visit their vicinities during the Polar night when the sun is below the horizon. In such an event the light of the current might be distinguished rising from the openings. However, if human beings should enter the substance of the current at either opening, their experience would be such as ours has been, and as yours is destined to be."

"Why is our sense of touch different from the senses of sight and hearing?" asked Athalie. "We cannot touch you, but can see and hear you."

"Because touch is more of a bodily or animal sensation," was the reply. "Seeing and hearing are functions of the soul, and not of the body, this being as true of mortals as of immortals. It is not the eyes that see, or the ears that hear, but the soul within that sees and hears through the eyes and ears.

(NOTE.—Here Victor directed me to make a drawing representing the course of the current through the earth, the result of which is shown in the following cut. It may be crude, but kindly take into account the circumstances under which it was done.)



"This current travels throughout the regions of space to the limits of the universe, and every heavenly body in the universe has a passageway through it similar to this, through which the current also travels. It is supposed to emanate and receive its power from the center of the universe, and from it the suns and planets receive life and animation. It contains the essence of light and life, and for this reason a mortal who breathes the substance of which it is composed, is enabled to live and retain health and strength without food or drink, the only natural requirement being regular sleep, which comes of its own accord eight hours out of every twenty-four, and cannot be delayed at will. This you will soon learn for yourselves.

"In the branch cavern or outlet through which you came, as I have already told you, the substance of the current is not continually emitted, but only superfluous charges thrown off at intervals, and during the lulls or lapses in which there is none of the substance surrounding you, the fatigue becomes overpowering as you have described, and causes sleep. For this reason sleep does not come at regular intervals until you reach this main passageway. The current here is composed principally of electricity and magnetism, containing in a condensed form the essences of both."

We were dumfounded at this intelligence. Our impressions can better be imagined than described as we reflected upon this singular information. We had unwittingly, and through circumstances beyond our control, entered into the very body or current that performs the marvelous office of connecting the suns and planets of the universe, thus rendering it one grand harmonious whole, each part bearing a distinctive relation to all other parts.

But our curiosity was not half satisfied.

"How do you happen to be clothed," asked Athalie, "considering that you are immortal beings?"

"We are clothed by your own thoughts," answered Mera. "It is impossible for your minds, since they are influenced by the properties of the current, to conceive of human personalities otherwise than as clad in some kind of raiment. It is in our power to make you see us clothed, as we desire, and the reason for your seeing us now in these costumes is because we wish you to see us as we appeared in mortal life. It is also in your power to clothe us by your thoughts. Visualize us in modern dress, and so we will appear to you. You may likewise visualize flowers, trees, hills, valleys and all manner of objects and scenery at will."

We found this to be a beautiful truth.

"And do none of the inhabitants of the outer earth know anything of this passageway and current?" I asked.

"No mortals inhabiting inner or outer earth, except yourselves," replied Arlo. "Yet," he continued, "they frequently see the effects of this current."

"How?" I asked quickly.

"Have you ever seen the Aurora Borealis?" he asked.

I replied in the affirmative.

"The polar auroras," he explained, "are the results of the contact of the current with the atmosphere of the earth's surface at the exit and entrance."

"Why are the auroras sometime brilliant; at other times faint; sometimes visible long distances; often invisible?" I asked.

"Their intensity depends wholly upon the condition of the atmosphere with regard to moisture," was his reply.

"How are we to get back to where we came from?" asked Athalie.

"You cannot," answered Mera. "You may go to the northern or southern opening, and step out on the earth's surface, but you can never leave the current after having once come within its influence. You can go as far as it extends, but no farther."

This should have been a stunning piece of intelligence, but, strange to say, I did not take it to heart. I had no control of my feelings, and was as buoyant and light-hearted in the face of this calamity as I had ever been under any circumstances in my life. I had expected Athalie to turn pale and possibly faint, but her expression lost none of its cheerfulness. She remained perfectly calm and unruffled. The strangeness of the situation and of the truths we heard, had driven all thought of escape from our minds.

"You are surprised at your own feelings," cried Mera, divining our thoughts, "but you cannot give way to sadness or sorrow here. Such sensations are unknown in the midst of the properties of this current."

"But joy can be known here?" I queried.

"Joy, pleasure, and happiness only are experienced," answered Arlo. "Their negatives are unknown."

"Why may we not leave the current?" I inquired.

"Ethereal beings may roam at will," he replied, "but material objects are held firmly within its influence, through the power of attraction. In walking through this passageway you will come to openings here and there of branch caverns like that through which you came, but you cannot enter into them try ever so hard, even though they be at your very feet, as they will be at times. This is governed by the respective positions of the earth in its daily revolutions. If you should walk from the North to the

South Pole, and were enabled to look through the passageway and see your track, it would resemble the thread of an auger, covering, during every twenty-four hours of your walk, all sides of this circular apartment. This is what enables you to come to those openings similar to that through which you entered; that identical opening may be at your feet the next time you see it, instead of above your head."

"How far is it from here to the North Pole?" I asked.

"Not very far," was the response. "You ought to be able to calculate the distance. We are now standing nearly beneath the 68th parallel of latitude, according to the reckonings of earthly geographers of today. We are also a hundred miles below the earth's surface. Thus you see it would not be a very great journey. We would advise you to lose as little time as possible in making it, for, once there, you will behold wonders of which you little dream at present."

We had chanced to be traveling in the proper direction when we met them. Arlo and Mera then left us to ourselves, and we continued our journey. Many times, however, they met and accompanied us long distances, on which occasions they dispelled the monotony by explanations in regard to our surroundings.

On one of these occasions, Athalie turned to Mera and said:

"We have been taught that the interior of the earth is a mass of heated and molten matter, existing at a much less distance beneath the surface than that at which you tell us this passageway is located."

"Excluding the space occupied by the current's passageway, and the walls surrounding it," answered Mera, "that theory is true. Beyond the thickness of the walls, above, below, and on either hand, there exists an ocean of burning, molten lava, but the walls themselves are miles in thickness, and the properties of the current which moulded them, being all-powerful, render them impregnable as against the pressure. Neither earthquakes nor convulsions of any other kind can affect them. This passage will remain as it is so long as earth exists."

"But why is it not insufferably hot?"

"Because the properties of the current are stronger than fire and counteract the heat as it approaches through the wall."

"And does this current," I asked, "with its subtle elements of electricity, magnetism and other powerful properties, animate the earth as well as all other heavenly bodies?"

"So we have told you," responded Arlo.

"Then has the moon a passageway, and is it also thus animated?"

"No," he replied. "In speaking of the heavenly bodies, we do not speak in a sense that includes the moon or any other of the satellites. They are merely masses of matter that have been hurled from the planets, and the animation which comes from the current, and which supplied those particular masses that have now been resolved into satellites, discontinued to animate them after a time, and separated from the matter, leaving it practically cold and dead, while the mass of animation, consisting of the substance of the current, assumed after the separation a certain shape and a visible form, wandering through the regions of space without regularity as to orbits. These separated portions of the inter-stellar connecting link or electro-magnetic current are known to the inhabitants of earth as comets. Each comet is a mass of the properties of the current that once animated a portion of some planet in the universe that was subsequently separated and became a satellite. There are many of these satellites in our own solar system, while the countless numbers that may be in the combined systems of the entire universe cannot be estimated, and naturally the result of each must be a comet. The comets are composed of exactly the same matter as that with which we are surrounded, save and except the life-giving portion, that having returned by attraction into the main current."

"Then there should also be a comet for each planet," I suggested, "as it has been determined by astronomical science that the planets themselves were formed by having been thrown off in like manner from the sun and that they are gradually losing their animation by cooling from their surfaces downward."

"That is but an incorrect theory," said Arlo. "The planets are fixed institutions in the all-wise order of creation. They form a part, both of the mortal and immortal existence of life."

CHAPTER III

The Past: A Thousand Centuries Ago.

"Those ages have no memory—but they left
A record in the desert—columns strown
On the waste sands, and statues fall'n and cleft
Heaped like a host in battle overthrown;
Vast ruins where the mountain's ribs of stone
Were hewn into a city; streets that spread
In the dark earth, where never breath has blown
Of heaven's sweet air, nor foot of man dares tread
The long and perilous ways—the Cities of the Dead."—*Bryant.*

"What was the condition of the outer earth at the time you lived?" I asked, on one of the occasions of our journeyings with the two souls.

"Physically, it was very different from its present state," replied Arlo. "The land and the water areas were in about the same proportion as now, but there was a different distribution. The land, with the exception of a few small islands adjacent to the coast, the Antarctic Continent, and a small, circular island in the vicinity of the North Pole, in the center of which is the opening of the passageway through which the current has its exit, and regarding which you will learn much from personal observation very soon, was all in one body—one enormous continent—washed on all sides by the sea. That was prior to the time that the glacier swept downward from the North which catastrophe was occasioned by a tremendous convulsion of nature.

"This great body of land comprised all the continents and islands of today in one mass, which by that convulsion that occurred about a century later was broken and scattered, and the separated masses were drifted long distances apart by the waters that rolled between them. The ocean that is now called the Atlantic had no separate existence of its own prior to that convulsion, and the space now occupied by it was then the interior of this great continent. The eastern shore of the western continent now existing, and the western shore of the eastern continent of today, were then joined from the northern to the southern extremities, thus rendering what are now the coasts or limitations of these continents the interior of the great—the one continent, that interior having its location in what is now the midst of the Atlantic Ocean, the continents having been pushed or drifted in opposite directions by the inundation of the water after the eruption. This was the principal and most important of the many separations.

"The next chief separation was the displacement of that body of land known as Australia, the location it had occupied with reference to the continent giving place to that portion of the sea now known as the Indian Ocean. Mortals ought, by consulting maps of the world in this age, to be able to discern at a glance that such was once the condition of the earth's surface. Nothing can be plainer to the observation than that the projections on the coast of each continent correspond with the indentations on the coast of the other."

I knew this to be true, and was now convinced as to how many things had

occurred that had hitherto been unaccounted for except on unsubstantial theories: for instance, the traces of ancient civilization found in American countries, and their identity with similar discoveries in Europe and Africa. The fact that they had at one time all been united in one country—one body of land—was a full and complete explanation.

"What of the people, their customs and government, that populated the earth in your age, prior to that great convulsion?" asked Athalie.

"The people of that time were principally of a high order of intelligence, and, as the land surface of the earth was in one body it was considered one country, and placed under one government," answered Mera.

"How were the people affected by the convulsion that separated the world into continents and islands, and by the glacier that afterward swept across a part of those divisions of land?" I asked.

"The majority of the people were destroyed by the convulsion," answered Arlo, "and most of those who escaped direct destruction, perished shortly afterward from the effects of hunger, cold and heat—climatical changes to which they had been unaccustomed—before the coming of the glacier. The latter swept from the face of the earth all human and animal life that remained as far as it proceeded, with the exception of a select few residing in the Caucasian mountains in Asia. These persons took refuge in caves and dens among the mountains, where they had made ample provision for sustenance, and thereby escaped. From those people sprang what is called the Caucasian race as it now exists. You may be surprised when we inform you that the people prior to that time all bore the same characteristics that now mark the Caucasian.

"The people that escaped with their lives in other portions of the land were largely influenced both physically and mentally by the change of climate, and their surroundings were also thus influenced, so that they not only became different in structure and color, but also in disposition, habits and languages. Hence the division into races and nations that now characterizes the inhabitants of the earth."

"What was the prevailing religion of your day?" asked Athalie.

"Religion was a theme of discussion then, as now," replied Mera. "Mankind were puzzled to know from whence they came, and whither they were trending; hence many doctrines were promulgated and had their followers. None of them were similar, however, to the doctrines of today, except in the two great principles: Belief in the existence of a Supreme Being, and in a hereafter. But everyone was allowed the full enjoyment of his opinions with respect to these matters. While differences of opinion were frequently discussed, they were not made a subject of bloodshed, as has been the custom during the last thirty or forty centuries."

"What manner of government was in existence at that time?" I asked.

"The government of the world, at the time we lived in it, was similar to the form of government in vogue in the different republics of the earth today. There were many necessary differences, owing to the fact that the world being comprised in one government, one nation and one country, there was no such thing as intercourse with nations, giving rise to numerous international affairs and customs. People had reached a high stage of civilization, enlightenment and culture, but until the adoption of a new law, the secret of the necessity of absolute equality between man and man under the protection of the government had not been discovered and practically applied to life.

"I shall relate briefly what brought about that change. You will understand that the times, ideas, customs and language were far different from those of the present, but I will tell it from a modern standpoint, so that you may the more clearly comprehend.

"The government was supposed to be of the people, by the people, and for the people. That was the original intention in establishing it in that form. There were two great political parties, who nominated men for the high offices of rulers of the land, and the offices were secured by means of elections, thus placing the chosen leaders of one party or the other in power; they were about equally divided, so that sometimes the administration was by one party, sometimes by the other. Men only were permitted to vote.

"As time progressed these parties became corrupt to a certain extent, and finally grew to differ only in name. For campaign purposes alone they pretended to differ in a few minor points, which, however, were not salient, and made no particular difference one way or the other, so far as the welfare of the people under either administration was concerned.

"Wealth became the controlling power, and the centralization of wealth began to assume dangerous proportions. The parties leagued together in the interests of capitalists, and against the interests of the masses, composed of laborers, mechanics and tillers of the soil—in short, of the wealth producers. Officials catered to the wishes and whims of capitalists. Pernicious and unwholesome legislation was effected, designed to make the rich richer, and the poor poorer.

"In order to counteract this, organizations began to be formed among the masses, and soon it became a question of organized labor against organized capital. The latter, though recognized by the laws of the country refused to recognize the laborers' and wealth producers' organizations, and by means of bribery succeeded in having their position sustained by the government. They legislated to cheat the farmers out of their crops, the mechanics out of their skill, and the laborers out of their toil. Courts, judges, juries and professions became the merest tools of capital. Combinations, such as corporations, rings, monopolies and trusts flourished, and governed the world.

"The people finally rebelled and were about to rise in their might, when it was wisely decided to experiment with woman suffrage. Woman was accorded the God-given right of representation in the administration of governmental affairs, when peace immediately resumed sway and no wiser government, and more prosperous, happier and better people ever existed than did those of that period immediately preceding the convulsion and glacier."

CHAPTER IV

The Future: The Realm of Disembodied Souls.

"Oh, sacred star of evening, tell
In what unseen celestial sphere,
Those spirits of the perfect dwell,
Too pure to rest in sadness here.

"Roam they the crystal fields of light,
O'er paths by holy angels trod,
Their robes with heavenly luster bright,
Their home the Paradise of God?

"Soul of the just! And canst thou soar
Amid those radiant spheres sublime,
Where countless hosts of heaven adore,
Beyond the bounds of space and time?"

—*Peabody.*

On a memorable occasion, after having traveled steadily during a number of days, Arlo and Mera appeared to us with the welcome announcement that we were nearing our journey's end, and that a few minutes' further walk would bring us to the portal to the outer world through which the current has its exit into space. They requested us to continue to the opening, and there explore our surroundings to our complete satisfaction, after which they would again join us. They then disappeared.

We immediately beheld a different light a short distance beyond. The passageway, instead of becoming larger, had diminished in extent after the reuniting of the streams of the current, and continued to taper as we progressed. It was now very small, but we were informed that the properties of the current increased in strength in proportion to the space it occupied. Zephyrs of a more familiar atmosphere fanned our cheeks. In a short time we found ourselves standing in the center of a small circular island at the outer rim of the opening through which we had come, and which resembled a crater, with the ground sloping away in all directions, leaving the summit of the eminence probably the highest point within the Arctic Circle.

What was our astonishment to find the sky blue and serene, the air mild and filled with the fragrance of blooming flowers, and feathered songsters flying hither and thither, filling the soft and balmy atmosphere with the melody of their blended warblings. The island resembled a park decorated with trees, shrubbery and flowers. It was light but the sun was not visible.

"There must be some mistake!" exclaimed Athalie. "This cannot be in the midst of Arctic regions!"

Looking across the waters I described a white boundary line with jagged and irregular projections.

"There are ice-fields in the distance," I ventured.

"How strange and incomprehensible!" she murmured.

Looking directly below us what was our amazement to see two vessels with masts and rigging, apparently anchored at the water's edge; and on the opposite side of the island, which was not more than a half mile in diameter, we saw another vessel hugging the shore. Hitherto we had overlooked these by looking above them.

"We can leave this place!" cried Athalie.

Hand in hand we approached the first two vessels in the belief that until now we must have been dreaming. We soon reached the seaside where we stood gazing upon the vessels. They were vacant, and still as the grave. Not a sign of life was visible, except here and there a bird perched upon a naked mast, or flitting through the dismantled rigging. But a thunderbolt falling at our feet could not have brought us to a more sudden standstill, nor more completely taken away our breath, than the sight of the names those partially defaced, printed letters indicated, the *"TERROR"* and the *"EREBUS."*

Having been familiar with the history of the Franklin expedition, one can easily imagine how it must have affected us to stand face to face with those ill-fated crafts. We already knew partially the fate of the noble crews that had manned those ships; but the mystery was how those vessels themselves chanced to be there hugging that lonely bank like grim skeletons, nothing remaining but the bruised and broken wood work, betokening many struggles with floating fields of ice, or contact with the ragged shores of glaciers.

Athalie was now willing to admit that we must be near the North Pole. Even though our island was smiling with flowers, and the air was alive with the songs of birds, we knew from the icebergs to the south of us, that we were standing on the northern shore of the Open Polar Sea; that sea which was discovered by Dr. Kane and his companions on the 22nd of June, 1854, when they stood on an eminence near Mt. Edward Parry looking northward. Had it been practicable for them to have launched their vessels in those waters, they would no doubt have met with an experience similar to ours.

As the vessels were accessible from the bank, we ascended to the deck of the *"TERROR"* with but little difficulty, and from thence beheld a scene enacted to the south of us, and round about, the glories of which were simply indescribable.

A large, dark segment of blue-black masses of cloud, lay upon the waters southward at a distance of perhaps twenty miles. From the center of the island or opening there approached an arc of light comprising such colors as we had noticed in the passageway. This curve of light passed over us, followed by another, still another, and yet many more each lending to the landscape a peculiar brilliance.

As these arcs of light approached, the thick stratum of cloud or vapor that lay to the south moved northward to meet them, after which they seemed to lie stationary above it. Each new curve rendered the succeeding brightness of the arch of light above the dark mass still greater. Soon it began to sparkle, vibrate and quiver like a flame shaken by the wind. The arches next began forming into symmetrical figures, mingling with the mass of vapors that rose into it, presenting strange and fantastic shapes and designs. Rays of colored light began to flash upward, reaching in a southerly direction, green at the base, golden yellow at the center, and red-purple at the extremity, while black or dark violet rays alternated with the rings of light, producing a striking and beautiful contrast.

The whole spectacle originated from the contact of the dense, dark mass of vapor that lay upon the sea with the curves of light that came from the opening. It was an Aurora Borealis, and instead of viewing it as we had always done, from the south, we were behind the scenes, witnesses not only of the effect but of the cause also.

Electricity and magnetism are, as has been generally supposed by scientists and philosophers, the chief agents in its production. The magnetic center of the earth, continually varying within a limited space in the vicinity of the pole, it is at this point that the gathering vapor is drawn in such great masses as to form the dark cloud we beheld, which becomes charged with the electricity that is carried to it in the curves of light, till it is overcharged, and the fusion takes place that produces the wondrous and beautiful display. The light approaches in arches or curves, because the current's passageway is circular in form, and the electricity being emitted on all sides at once, creates that circular or ring-like form, as it is really a ring composed of the substance of the current, and surrounds the earth as it travels to meet the vapor.

It was, in all probability, a similar mass of vapors that was seen by members of the Greely Expedition on the 15th day of May, 1882, described by them as a low blue streak, resembling distant land, or a cloud.

We descended from the deck to the shore which we followed around the island until we came to the other vessel, which proved to be the *"ADVANCE,"* that had been imbedded in the ice and hopelessly abandoned by Dr. Kane, after his discovery of the Open Polar Sea; another once stately ship, famed in history, but abandoned to a lonely fate.

We continued to follow the shore until it brought us to our starting point, where lay the *"TERROR"* and the *"EREBUS."* We had compassed the Auroral Island (as we have decided to call it), and from every part of the shore had witnessed the same auroral display upon the sea.

Returning to the entrance, we found Arlo and Mera awaiting us, and plied them with questions in regard to our recent discoveries.

They told us that, after the abandonment of the *"TERROR"* and *"EREBUS"* by the surviving remnant of the crews, in 1848, the vessels remained wedged between the icebergs for two years. In June, 1850, a sudden breaking up of the ice at that point had

opened a channel through which they floated northward until again caught and imbedded in the ice. A year later another break occurred that released them once more, and propelled them poleward with an impetus that had driven them into the ring of water surrounding the Auroral Island. They then entered into the magnetic circle, and by the attraction of the current, they, like the *"ADVANCE,"* had been drawn northward to the shore of the island. These three vessels will skirt that shore forever, surrounded by an influence in which physical decay is impossible.

All honor to the brave polar explorers who have followed one another in a long succession, striving in the face of the most frightful obstacles and enduring the most dreadful hardships. Their quest has finally been rewarded, in our own day and age, by the respective discoveries of our own race, and citizens of our own and other countries.

I shall reserve the narration of the great event which here occurred until I have told you some of the amazing truths that were learned by us at this time and afterward through conversation with Arlo and Mera, as well as with other souls with whom we subsequently had the pleasure to meet and become familiar. It would require volumes to contain all these truths, but I shall confine my statements to the substance of the explanations that have been accorded us touching those matters which are subjects of faith or speculation with mortals. Your knowledge of my views regarding spiritualism, will enable you to better appreciate the sincerity of my statements.

The Abode of Disembodied Souls—of the earth as well as of all the other planets—comprises our entire solar system, including the different worlds and the intervening spaces, of which the sun is the grand center. They are privileged to roam among the mortals of earth and are often hovering near their loved ones, shielding them from danger by means of warnings, in dreams, and otherwise; sometimes actually restraining them by force from taking steps which would lead to ruin or death. This is sometimes realized by, or made known to, the mortal thus affected. It is very usual, however, for a disembodied soul to appear to a dying relative, friend, or acquaintance. How this is possible I shall explain later in another connection.

On the same principle that matter is never destroyed, but simply changes form, when subjected to various conditions, no life is ever destroyed, but simply changes form, when subjected to various conditions, no life is ever destroyed, but merely changes form and location, and progresses. This condition is not limited simply to human life, but pertains to all life—animal and vegetable, as well as human.

The planets are all inhabited the same as earth, by vegetation and animals. These inhabitants present essential differences in appearance, character and disposition, characteristic of the planets on which they belong.

It is known to the disembodied souls of the Immediate Hereafter that each of the other solar systems of the universe is formed on the same principle as ours. As the planets revolve around, and depend upon given centers, these being their respective suns, so the solar systems likewise revolve around a given center. Then that great system composed of solar systems, together with other such great systems, has its common center, and so on. This great combination of systems within systems eventually has its limit, culminating in one glorious and magnificent center, the grand ultimatum of the progress of all souls.

In contrast to this magnificent center of the universe is that realm of space known as outer darkness. You will doubtless be surprised when I inform you that this realm of outer darkness is nearly always within your plain view, being nothing more nor less than the blue sky. Contrary to the general opinion, the universe is finite and circumscribed. Its confines are within the blue vault that surrounds it. Nothing is supposed to exist beyond this blue vault but gases—the material from which all the worlds have been constructed, and from which new worlds are constantly being constructed, through ignition caused by fiery bodies from the universe plunging into it. These new worlds first assume the form of nebulae, and finally of planets. In view of the many conflicting theories of philosophers as to what constitutes the sky, people are prone to take ideas for granted, and not to investigate for themselves. It is patent to any intelligent mortal being, if he merely stops to consider, that the sky is beyond the farthest star of the universe, no matter how many millions of millions of miles that star may be from our solar system. The sky is opaque. It is matter. Such matter intervening between a star and the earth would obscure the star from view. The philosophy of light waves, atmosphere, ether and dust particles, is erroneous and unfounded. The souls of the Realm can travel to the very outer limits of the Solar System, and from there, they inform me, the blue sky can be seen by them, and is to all appearances as far away as ever. They can see stars—suns of other systems—that are far beyond the reach of the most powerful of earthly telescopes, and yet, the deep blue mass is beyond those farthest stars; otherwise these stars would be invisible. It was startling to me to learn, and will probably be startling to mortals of earth who stop to think of it, that people have always had directly before their eyes, and within easy vision, the substance that surrounds and circumscribes the universe.

A hundred thousand years is the average term of the sojourn of a soul in the Immediate Hereafter, at the end of which period an ascension is made, and the soul translated to a region beyond, of which it knows naught, except that it must be a higher realm in the scale of progression.

Disembodied souls of the realm can appear to mortals of earth only under certain conditions, but sometimes these conditions actually exist in such manner that they may appear. If by any chance a mortal being upon the earth, or any other planet, for that matter, becomes surrounded by the properties of the current in their completeness, it is possible for him to see and communicate with such immortals as may come within visible distance.

Again, if a portion of the brain of a living man becomes inanimate from an injury, disease, or otherwise, the life that had inhabited that particular portion of the brain begins at once to inhabit the Abode of Disembodied Souls, for the life continues to exist after leaving the body; and if that portion of the brain had contained some of the perceptive faculties, then the mortal is enabled to see and hear those things which are immortal. This is why an insane person speaks of visions during his waking hours. Here is the promised explanation of the phenomena of appearances of friends, who have passed away, to the dying, which so frequently occurs.

The chief end and aim of the disembodied souls in the Immediate Hereafter is to prepare by the pursuit of universal happiness, and the acquisition of universal knowledge for a loftier flight into the realm of the everlasting. How these pursuits are conducted, I can only know when I myself become a disembodied soul.

It consists largely of worship, and striving after knowledge is considered the highest form of worship, because it manifests an appreciation of the wonderful works of the Almighty. Their motto might be put in the words of Job: "Canst thou by searching find out God?" They accept evolution as the

grand order of creation. They regard the human beings of the different planets as the highest order of creation in the Solar System. Inanimate substances evolve into vegetation; vegetation into animal life; animal life, beginning with the lowest forms, evolves by rising degrees into humanity. Life constitutes the difference between inanimate substances and vegetation; mind constitutes the difference between vegetable and animal life; and the soul constitutes the difference between animal and human life. From what I have already related, the question of the survival of human personality after death is settled. The soul has an evolution, yet is essentially dependent for its growth upon the Supreme Being, whose non-existence would render evolution itself impossible.

All strivings for knowledge in the Immediate Hereafter are accompanied by prayer, and it is the general belief that the great finale of the soul is to become, through evolution—not a separate entity—but one with God.

CHAPTER V

Eternity: Greeted by Angels.

"While thus they spake, the angelic caravan,
Arriving like a rush of mighty wind,
Cleaving the fields of space, as doth the swan
Some silver stream - Halted before the gate."
—*Byron.*

As we still stood at the rim of the opening, conversing with Arlo and Mera, the aurora continued to play, growing every moment more magnificent in brilliancy and alternations of shade and color. It hung before us in space like a vast illumined curtain, swinging to and fro, draping and undraping; sometimes approaching, sometimes receding.

Finally the auroral curtain approached nearer than at any time before, and hung directly in front of us, seemingly almost within our reach; at the same time sounds of rare and entrancing music greeted our ears. As the music grew more distinct, a rift appeared in the center of the curtain, emitting a flood of golden light. The scene that followed baffles all attempts at description, for here it was that we two mortal beings were granted a glimpse of the Beyond.

A lovely landscape appeared before us, stretching seemingly from our feet outward into space until it mingled with the auroral display in the background, revealing hills and valleys, rivers and lakes, trees and flowers; while in the immediate foreground was a natural amphitheater, exceedingly spacious, formed by a terraced cove in a hillside.

Suddenly there came with a rush an immense concourse of spirits from all parts of the landscape, who began to fill the amphitheater, and continued to come until it was filled to overflowing, their apparel presenting a mingling of all beautiful shades, colors and tasteful designs, among which many were strange to us, far excelling the stretch of our power of conception of beauty and figure. Beyond the amphitheater we could see many other ethereal beings moving hither and thither, alone or in groups. They seemed to glide rather than walk.

An immense concourse of singers clad in robes of purest white, moved forward, singing as they came, and occupied a position to the right of the center of the scene. At the same time a group of six persons—three men and three women—separated from the throng back of the center, and took a position to the left, opposite to, and facing, the singers.

Lost in awe and admiration, I stood gazing upon the panorama as one in a dream, when I was startled by a sudden scream from Athalie, who reached forth her hands, exclaiming: "Oh, my dear, dear father! There he is! It is he!"

Here two of the men and two of the women moved toward us. One of the later I immediately recognized as my mother. In another moment they had joined us. Those we had failed to recognize were Athalie's mother and my father, both of whom had died when we were infants. Here were both of my parents, and both of hers. The meeting can be easier imagined than described. I tried to take my mother's hand, but touched only empty space as Athalie had formerly done when she attempted to take the hand of Mera. But she greeted me with her sweet smile of yore and words of welcome, while Athalie and her father were expressing their happiness at the meeting which filled their cup of joy to overflowing. My own father and Athalie's mother were delighted beyond measure to see us in a position to behold them and converse with them, and told us with what fondness and solicitude they had ever watched over us since the days of our childhood.

My father beckoned to the remainder of the group at the left, when the remaining woman and man approached us. I wish I could see your face when I tell you the identity of these two beings. They were no other than your own parents. They regarded me almost as a son, owing to my comradeship with you. They await your advent with patience, but with fondest anticipations. They can observe your movements when they choose to do so and have always regarded you with love and tenderness.

Words are inadequate to describe the affair in its entirety in such a manner as to impart to you the faintest realization of the actual scene. The music welled forth, at first softly, but swelling gradually into such a mighty volume of melody that I was reminded of De Quincey's Dream-Fugue, which you and I once read together. With it mingled the sounds of voices and laughter, joy and happiness. Following those of the group that surrounded us, others began to approach from among that ethereal audience of thousands upon thousands of immortals who had assembled together to receive us within their Realm. The first to greet us personally were relatives, after these came friends, and, lastly acquaintances. Thus we were enabled to meet again many departed souls whom we had known, and in whom we had been interested when they were in the flesh; many among them we had not met on earth; some had died before we were born, but we knew of them. We noticed particularly that no person whom we had known on earth as a desperately wicked character came forward to greet us. We learned afterward that these souls were undergoing a state of probation in which they were compelled to overcome all evil propensities before they were permitted to join the souls of the Realm. The more wicked they had been, the longer and more terrible the struggle.

We know not who else may have been in the throng from which our well-wishers came. All the souls of the Realm were not there. There may, however, have been many eminent historical and biblical characters among them. Being curious to know if the Saviour and His apostles, and the prophets of the Old Testament were inhabitants of the Immediate Hereafter, I later made bold to inquire, when I was informed that all sanctified spirits passed directly through this first Realm to the higher and grander Realms beyond. I learned moreover that many who had claimed santification on earth were found to be further from it than many who had made no such claim.

Can you in imagination dwell upon the scene that I have tried to picture? Can you see us standing upon the summit of that circular island, the center of an amphitheater bounded by auroras of indescribable splendor; the mighty crowds of immortals surrounding us; the hills and valleys, lakes and rivers, forests and meadows, stretching into distant space, all bathed in a soft purple and

(Continued on page 186)

To Few Is It Permitted to Penetrate Into the Afterlife, But This Experience Was Given to the Dissolute Tom Crissey

A GLIMPSE BEYOND

By H. M. HAMILTON

BEFORE I tell this, I want to make one thing plain. I am not—and never have been—what they call a spiritualist. I've never even thought about such things. Before prohibition, I was always too busy selling booze at a place of mine on Third Avenue. After prohibition—well, I may as well be frank!—I was still busy doing the same thing.

Once, however, I heard a fellow talk about the subject. Arthur Delano, his name was—a nice, quiet, bookish sort of chap, without a trace of swelled head. One thing he said I remember:

"Life—in this world or the next—is simply a matter of adjusting oneself to one's environment!"

Humbug! I thought. It didn't make any sense to me—then. I thought it was high-brow bunk. I might have forgotten it altogether by this time, if it hadn't been brought to mind rather forcibly on another occasion, by the same man. I'd like to write it down just as I recall it.

I had been out at Jake Dyer's place on the Larchmont Road for three days, drinking. The third morning I fell in with a girl who went by the name of Hilda Gronner. She asked me to take her in to town with me. I knew I ought to be attending to business—you've got to watch those cash-register chaps—so I said all right; I'd drive her in.

This Hilda Gronner was pretty in a poisonous sort of way; white-skinned like a fungus, with little brown eyes. I was more or less crazy about her.

Well, I had my ninety-horse-power speedster waiting for her in the inn courtyard, and was sitting there quietly, smoking, when I happened to see this man Delano I've mentioned. He didn't notice me, at first, but he motioned to a waiter and asked him to call a taxi. In a few minutes the taxi came. I knew the driver of it, incidentally, a red-headed lad by the name of Rafferty. Delano saw me and came over and shook hands, then he excused himself as a very pretty young woman came out. The two of them got into Rafferty's yellow cab and drove off.

It was some little time before Hilda showed up; when she did she seemed sore about something. I asked her what was wrong; she said she didn't like to ride with a drunken man. She meant me. That made me mad: I wasn't drunk, though I had had a couple of bracers while I waited.

We started off at a good clip. I wasn't in a very good humor, so I let the old boat out a little. We made between fifty and sixty an hour on some stretches of straight road. I wanted to show her I wasn't too drunk to drive, anyhow. She squealed and caught my arm to make me slow down. I tried to put one arm around her, but she slapped my face, and told me to watch what I was doing.

Then, just at a turn outside Bay Chester, I clamped down the brakes tight to keep from smashing into a yellow machine that stood in the middle of the road. We slid along and came to a stop. I saw that the man working with the engine was Rafferty.

"Need any help, Terence?" I sang out.

"Yes, but I need more help than you can give me, Tom Crissey, I'm thinkin'," he said, his face brick-red with exertion and anger. "I've done everything I know to do, and devil a foot will she stir! I stand to lose a ten-dollar tip over this breakdown."

"That's too bad," I told him. "Anything I can do I'll be glad to—"

"Go on," whispered Hilda to me. "You ain't called on to earn his ten dollars for him."

"You *can* do something, Tom," said Rafferty. "This gentleman and the lady have to be at Grand Central inside of the hour . . . and it'll take that long for me to get a garageman. If, now, you could take the two of them—"

"Oh, that you, Tom?" said Delano, looking out. "It's Mr. Crissey, a friend of mine—" he told the woman with him. Then to me—"This is the second breakdown since Stamford. My car gave up the ghost just beyond that roadhouse. . . and now this one!"

He laughed ruefully.

"I guess we're hoodooed, Lucy."

Well, I had no choice except to go over to be introduced, though Hilda was looking black as a storm-cloud over the delay. Lucy Dean was the young lady's name.

"Though it won't be, long," added Delano, smiling.

She blushed, and held out her hand to me with a smile I liked, not at all as if I were an outcast, which is the way most women of her sort usually looked at me.

"I'm glad to meet you," she said.

And then, before I knew it, I had asked them to ride in with us.

"It may crowd you a bit," I said, "but I'll get you there in time to catch your train, anyhow."

"We're not catching it," said Delano. "We're meeting it. Lucy's sister is coming to New York for the wedding—Lucy and I are to be married tomorrow, Tom. We have now just—" he looked at his watch—"forty-one minutes to get there. It can't be done. I'd better phone a message."

"I'll get you there," I promised, "if you fix it up with Rafferty, the lad that brought you. It wasn't his fault."

Delano did so; then they got in—a pretty tight fit. I opened her up wide. We were doing fifty-five before we had gone a hundred yards.

"For God's sake!" whispered Hilda in my ear. "Cut it out! What do *we* care whether they meet her sister or not?"

For answer I opened her up another notch, and we took the curve on the rims of two wheels. Then I saw, just ahead, a child, walking across the road, slowly, the way a hen does. Hilda swore, and Miss Dean screamed softly.

Perhaps, if I had had time to think it out, I might have reasoned that our four lives were worth more than the child's one. But I didn't: I shot the car off to one side, straight at a stone wall outside the curve.

There was no time to say a word—we just went bang at it, and hit with a crash. . . a sort of flare-up of dazzling light in my eyes. . . and then I seemed to be going through an endless tunnel, with faint voices shouting in the midst of a darkness that roared. . .''

IT MAY have been longer or shorter, but it seemed to me just about a minute later that consciousness came back to me. Oddly enough, I had no feeling of being hurt at all; but I seemed, somehow, light as a feather, as though I were not in the midst of the smash-up at all, but floating in air somewhere above it. And besides, I could see—plainly, too. . .''

''Funny!'' I remember thinking. ''There's the machine down there, sure enough, in the turn of that wall. But—where the devil am *I*?''

Yes: I saw the car, smashed into scrap-iron; and there was a huddle of human shapes in it. But I was away from it all, looking down on it as if from mid-air!

While I looked, I saw two forms extricate themselves. One was Hilda. She staggered clumsily to her feet, and fumbled foolishly with her hair. The other—a woman also—had a blood-stained cut on her forehead, but she paid no attention to it. She was tugging at a limp body that lay half under the wrecked machine.

''Arthur!'' I heard her cry pitifully. ''Arthur! It's Lucy! Speak to me!''

Then she turned to the child who had been the cause of the whole thing, and who, quite unhurt, stood there staring stupidly.

''Run!'' she cried. ''Back up the road! There is a man there, working on an automobile. Tell him there has been an accident, and that he must get a doctor. Hurry!''

Finally the child got the idea, and started off, turning back sometimes to look at the wreck. Lucy Dean had Arthur Delano's head in her lap, and kept talking to him in a low tone: ''Arthur! Can't you speak to me, dear?''

I remember feeling very sorry for both of them, who were to have been married the next day. Then I thought: How puzzling it was, that I was able to look down on the whole thing, and yet seemed unable to give any aid. All of a sudden a voice said, quite close beside me:

''Since it had to be one of us, I'm glad it wasn't Lucy.''

The voice was Arthur Delano's—and it was close beside me! And yet—down there lay Arthur Delano, to all appearance dead!

''What does it mean?'' I asked. ''Where am I—and where are you?''

''You,'' he said calmly, ''are down under the steering wheel, I think.''

''But that's nonsense!'' I cried. ''I can't be there—I'm here! Yet there *is* somebody there—all twisted up—and he has a cap and a suit like mine. . . . but. . . .''

A sort of horror froze me: ''That can't be. . . I'm up here, talking to you! Who's that down there?'' I said hysterically.

In the silence that followed I could hear Lucy Dean's voice again:

''Can't you hear me, Arthur? Can't you speak to me?''

''Yes, dear,'' answered the voice beside me, quietly, ''I can speak, but you can't hear me!''

I saw Hilda walk to the side of the road and sit down on the grass.

''I don't want to look!'' she moaned. ''He's messed up terrible! My God! Why did I ever ask him to drive me—the way he was! I wish I hadn't!''

For a moment the mystery of these things held me speechless; then like a flash the solution dawned on me.

''Why—damn it, Arthur!'' I broke out, ''it can't mean that you and I are—''

''Yes,'' he said calmly. ''We're dead. It's—interesting, isn't it?''

''My God!'' I exclaimed weakly. ''Interesting! It's—awful!''

''It's hard for —Lucy,'' he added tenderly. ''I wish I could make her hear.''

''Dead!'' I mumbled the word to myself. ''Nonsense! It can't be! Why—*this* is too commonplace—too ordinary—just the way it was before. . . the trees and clouds and houses—everything! The only difference is, that I can't seem to do anything, except float around up here, instead of being down there where I really am—in the wreck, under the steering-wheel!'' I cried aloud: ''Why—I *can't* die like this! And by God, I won't!''

With no more effort than the effort of thinking about it, I went down close to the wreck, and stopped short beside Hilda Gronner. She was quite unhurt, except for a scratch or so on her smooth white cheek.

''Hilda!'' I shouted, as loud as I could.

Surely I could break down the invisible barrier between us, if I tried hard enough! And—near her—I was again aware of her cold, dangerous beauty, which appealed to my senses. I forgot everything else, in that appeal, and I touched her hand.

''Dear Hilda!'' I repeated.

''Ugh!'' she shuddered. ''Something gives me the cold chills! What a mess for a careful girl to get into! I wish that doctor would hurry; I want to get away from this!''

''Don't you understand?'' I heard Delano's voice. ''You can't touch her; you can never touch anything human again.''

I felt weak and sick.

''Say!'' I whispered. ''I need a drink—bad. D'you think I can get a drink somewhere?''

''The trouble with you—'' the quiet voice observed—''is that you don't seem to realize how extremely dead you are. You're done with drink—and with girls—and all that sort of thing; you may as well know it.''

''But I don't want to be dead!'' I stormed. ''I've got too many things to do yet. I'm young—I have my life to live. I've got money—and interests . . . there's that mare I entered at Belmont. . . and I've got my place in town to look after! Who will attend to it?''

No one answered me.

I went on wildly: ''Besides, there are so many things I want to do yet; I want to go abroad—and see the world! And the things I've done I want to do again . . . I want to run my speedster, with the wind in my face. . . I want to swim in deep water, and feel it cool on my body. . . I want to know some woman's true love—before I die! My God, Arthur! I'm in love with life! I can't die yet!''

''Yes, you are earth-bound,'' he said, very quietly.

''Don't play the hypocrite!'' I retorted roughly. *''You* don't want to die any more than I do. So don't talk like a prig!''

''Naturally, I don't want to die,'' he answered. ''I was just beginning to live. But the reason I don't like being dead is on Lucy's account. . . and as to that, I know she will come. So it doesn't matter—except just for the moment.''

While he talked, I kept looking down at the limp thing that had been Delano. Lucy Dean was stroking the dead fingers, and whispering:

''Only a little while, dear. Then I'll be with you. Wait for me.''

''You see,'' he went on, ''she understands. We've talked of these things often. We both thought there would be something—beyond. We tried to imagine what it would be like. . . to prepare for it, if we could.''

''You said once,'' I broke in, ''that life—beyond—was just a question of adjusting yourself to the things you'd find there.''

"That's what I mean, exactly!" he said. "We didn't know, of course, but we *thought*, that we would have some sort of life that wasn't physical; a new environment, that is to say. We love one another truly—and we can go on loving one another, not to speak of the many other things we care for together—music—and beautiful things in the world. We can still enjoy them, when we're together again. . ."

"But—what about *me?*" I demanded. "I've never learned to love anything—except the things I could do!"

"Well," said Delano. "You told me I talked like a prig. I don't want to. But it's hard to explain: You have never adjusted yourself to any environment except a physical one. You have a lot of habits; I don't mean to say that they are bad, but they are all habits belonging to that poor rag of a body of yours down there. You have never bothered with any other things. Now—without your body—you're lost. Do you see?"

I saw. How proud I had been of my strong young body—its activities, its beauty, its endurance, its keen senses! And there it lay, a broken machine that was truly all that there was of me, except a lot of dead habits and desires I could never again indulge!

"God!" I moaned. "If I could only have another chance!"

There was suddenly a stir of movement in the quiet countryside; the rapid-fire of a motor, then a little machine drew up to a grinding stop. Rafferty jumped out, then a little oldish man with a hand-satchel.

"Here's the doctor, Miss," said Rafferty to Hilda. "Awful, ain't it? Might just as easy have been me—as *them!*"

The doctor spent only a moment with Delano. He shook his head.

"I'm sorry, my dear," he said to Lucy. "Where is the other one?"

Lucy could not speak. Hilda closed her vanity-case and pointed.

"Over here," she said. "I wish to heaven I'd never set eyes on him. It don't do a nice girl no good to git mixed up in this sort of thing."

Without answering her, the doctor knelt beside what had been myself—Tom Crissey—straightening out the limbs, listening, prodding, and centering his attention upon a hideous gash at the top of the head. Hilda said:

"What's the use? He's dead. Can't you take me in to town?"

The doctor turned to Lucy Dean, saying:

"Singular case. So far as I can see, he *is* dead. There's no heart-action—no pulse—and yet his hands are warm and flexible. I wonder. . ."

He kept touching, poking, with his skillful fingers.

"I've seen odd things happen—with a fractured skull—compression—concussion. I may be wrong—but his pupil shows a faint reflex. . . I *think* . . ."

"Is there any hope?" asked Lucy. "I wish some one at least could be saved!"

"Hardly a chance in a million," said the doctor, taking out an instrument. "The man's almost certainly dead—yet I've half a mind to try to lift this bit of bone that is pressing in, and then run in with him to St. Stephen's. I'd like Doctor Owen to look at him."

Doctor Owen! I knew him: big, bluff, daring—no saint, either. I felt a queer touch of humor at the idea of one worldling trying to bring back another to life—and failing! But all this time the doctor's little spatula was prodding around. . . he put the end under a bit of skull, and lifted. No result! Then he lifted again—and I felt a horrible, sickening pain: The whole scene was wiped out as if by a sponge. . . and I was again in that roaring tunnel of darkness—of agony—and finally, of complete oblivion. . .

WHEN I opened my eyes, it was to see Doctor Owen's grizzled face grinning down to me—a reassuring grin.

"By Gad, Tom!" was his greeting. "I *did* bring you back! If ever there was a man three-fourths of the way into the great beyond—you're the chap! But I think I've got you back now . . . with a little rest-up. . ."

I heard a soft voice I knew; Lucy Dean was bending over me.

"Laura," she said, "he's going to live!"

At the words, another young woman came and stood beside her—a beautiful girl whom I had never seen, but somehow—I can't explain why—it seemed to me I had always known her. . . or at least, always been waiting for her!

"I've done all I can do," said Doctor Owen to the two women. "But Tom is all right—or will be. He will be back at his place on Third Avenue before the month is out."

"We will stay and watch with him for a while, my sister and I—" said Lucy to the doctor.

He nodded. I could not speak; but my eyes followed the girl who was Lucy Dean's sister—Laura, her name was—about the room, hoping *she* wouldn't go. A man *can* feel that way about a girl, the first time he sees her! I did!

It was later when I found my voice. I whispered to Lucy Dean:

"Two things. . . I want to tell you. . . and your sister. One is—I'm not going back to Third Avenue. The other. . . Arthur told me to tell you. . . it is all right. . . he will be waiting. . ."

She understood; she really knew that I had brought her a word from the dead! After a time she smiled through her tears.

"It was like him," she said, "to want me to know. . . But I knew—without being told! Thank you!"

I won't tell the rest—I needn't—except to say that—when I had come to know her sister Laura—and had told her that I wanted to begin over again—this time right—*she* understood too, that I had been given another chance—and that this time I wouldn't throw it away. We're married now; and we both know that when one of us goes into the beyond, there will be something. . . somebody to wait for!

Intrepid Conduct of Admiral Douglas

DURING the last disgraceful mutiny in the navy, this admiral commanded the Stately, of 64 guns. He was on shore, dining with Governor Brook, at St. Helena, when his first officer told him that a ship had arrived from England, and informed the Stately of the mutiny, in consequence of which his men had come and demanded the command of the ship. The admiral received the intelligence very coolly, and as the ship was under the guns of the forts and the sails unbent, he said to the governor, "I will go immediately on board, and if in fifteen minutes after I am in the ship they do not return to their duty, you will fire on her; for better that I go down with the ship than the men command her." This spirited determination he made known to the men, and added, if the ringleaders were not given up unconditionally, they knew what they were to expect. The fifteen minutes expired, and the fort began to fire; and thus ended the mutiny in those seas, by the intrepid conduct of one man. The ringleaders were given up, and two or three of them hanged.

Ask Houdini

THIS department is open to all readers of WEIRD TALES who have some question to propound. Houdini will attempt to answer any logical question on subjects relating to physical or psychic phenomena. Readers are requested not to duplicate questions that have already been answered by Houdini in these columns. Questions pertaining to the future and personalities will receive no attention. They must have a general interest, otherwise they will not be considered. All correspondence will be handled by Houdini personally and he is especially interested in hearing from those having unique experiences not easily explained.—*The Publishers.*

No. 1 Cumberland, Md.

My Dear Houdini:

What is meant by a clairaudient? I have heard this word mentioned among spiritualists, and have never had an explanation I could understand. K. L.

Answer

"Clairaudient" is French for "clear-hearing," and "clairvoyant" is French for "clear-seeing." A clairaudient, in the parlance of the spiritualists, is a medium who hears spirit voices, and a clairvoyant is one who sees spirit forms. The word "clairvoyant," however, usually includes both meanings.

No. 2

Madison, Wis.

Dear Mr. Houdini:

I am indeed interested to learn that you are taking up the subject of spiritualism and other matters of a bizarre nature in WEIRD TALES. It is not my intention to discuss the subject of spiritualism with you, but I wish you would answer frankly the question below.

Believing that most people approach the hour of death with fear and apprehension, regardless of the scientific proofs of the existence of psychic phenomena, don't you think that belief in the religion of spiritualism is to be encouraged if only that it helps to relieve this fear and that it would, too, assuage the grief of those who mourn for a departed one? C. A.

Answer

No, I do not think the belief in spiritualism ought to be encouraged until it is definitely proved to be honest, unless you wish to take the viewpoint that we ought to believe there is a Santa Claus. I would like to believe in a Santa Claus, I think, but you don't find fraud mediums who look upon their work as of a Santa Claus nature. I believe that one ought to face the inevitable with all the courage possible, knowing full well that we must face the great disintegration.

No. 3

Shelbyville, Ind.

Dear Houdini:

I have before me a well known spiritualistic publication which devotes a lot of space to your activities in the world of magic and especially to your remarkable escapes. In view of your present stand on the subject of spiritualism, I am curious to learn what you have to say concerning the following:

"The controversy raging round the performance of a lady entertainer who, posing as a 'medium,' recently mystified an audience composed of people well known in spiritualism and psychical research, re-opens the question as to the possibility of conjurers doing some of their sensational tricks by means other than normal.

"My friend, Harry Houdini, the famous American 'escape' artist, has more than once been credited with psychic powers by means of which he is supposed to perform some of his miracles. Though Houdini would be the last person to pretend to powers he does not possess, he has confided to me the fact that there have been occasions when he has been helped in his performances by some unseen and unknown force; an intangible 'friend in need' who has rescued him from many an awkward dilemma. Two of these incidents I will relate. I will add *en passant* that Houdini is not an adherent of the spiritual philosophy, but, like the majority of people, is 'willing to be convinced.'

"A favorite advertising 'stunt' (that is the only word for it) of Houdini's is to allow himself to be locked up in the strongest cell of the local prison of the town in which he happens to be performing. In the presence of witnesses he then 'escapes' by manipulating the locks and freeing himself.

"Houdini was once 'playing' a big town in one of the Western States, and had undertaken to escape from the exceptionally strong cell of the local jail. He was stripped, placed in the cell in a nude condition, and the heavy door was then closed. The key of the modern and complicated lock was then turned upon him in the presence of witnesses; the door tested; the keyhole sealed; and the key handed to the Governor of the jail who was taking a lively interest in the proceedings. The signal was then given to the occupant of the cell that all was ready. Houdini immediately approached the door, placed one hand upon it, and to the accompaniment of a sharp 'click' as the bolts shot back, the door slowly opened. In something under three seconds, Houdini was out of that cell. It would be difficult to say who was the more astonished—the Governor or Houdini, who at first thought that some mistake had been made and that the door had been prematurely opened by a warder. But the seals were intact, and all the witnesses vouched for the fact that no one was near the lock. The question as to *what* opened the door is still unanswered.

"The second incident is equally strange though of a different character. Houdini besides being able to break out of places, can break into them. A favorite feat of his is to open a safe or strong-room secured by complicated locks.

"A large banking corporation, with headquarters in New York, had recently installed a new strong-room, secured by the latest time-locks, in its chief office. At a board meeting, soon after the completion of the room, a director jokingly remarked that they ought to test the security of the room by challenging Houdini to open it. Though the remark was made in jest, the directors decided to act upon the suggestion, and Houdini was invited to test his skill upon the new locks, whose kinematic elements were the last word in ingenuity. Houdini accepted the challenge without knowing exactly the type of lock with which he had to deal.

"The mechanism of the lock in question was the application of watch or time 'movements,' so as to regulate the period during which an obstructing bolt was to be kept in its locked position. In a suitable case, mounted on the inside of the strong-room door, were four distinct chronometer 'movements.' Each 'movement,' instead of having ordinary clock hands, possessed a simple dial divided into seventy-two hours, or three days, and was arranged to make one revolution in that time. Each disc had a pin pro-

jecting from it, so placed as to move or slide a simple rod when the time had come for unlocking, the rod in its turn releasing the obstructing bolt; this then fell down by its own weight out of the way. In setting this lock, it was only necessary to wind up each 'movement' for the pre-determined number of hours and minutes that the strong-room door was to remain shut. Any one of the 'movements' was capable of alone putting the clock 'off guard' but four were provided in case of a possible breakdown on the part of one or two. There was no keyhole or the slightest aperture in the door, the large main bolts that kept it shut being worked by energy stored in springs, and these were tripped up and allowed to come into action by the 'timer' at the pre-determined hour.

"The timing mechanism of the door was set to a different hour each day, two persons only being in the secret: These were the President of the bank and the chief cashier, who consulted his principal as to the time of opening.

"It was arranged that Houdini should be at the bank at 2:30 p. m. on a given afternoon and one hour was to be allotted him for his trial. A distinguished company of prominent New Yorkers was invited to meet the wonderworker.

"At the appointed time the wizard appeared, and he at once started to inspect the strong-room door, the exterior surface of which was merely a massive sheet of steel. Houdini at once realized that he had a difficult proposition before him, and began considering how he should tackle it.

"Suddenly, across the strong-room door, the figures "4:37" appeared to Houdini in luminous characters. That the figures were purely subjective there can be no doubt as no one except the magician saw them. After a while, the figures disappeared, but they were fixed indelibly in his mind, and he could think of nothing else. Everywhere he looked, he seemed to see the cryptic numbers, which impressed him so much that he became convinced that the figures were meant for his guidance; so he determined to make a test. He asked permission to take the remainder (fifteen minutes had already elapsed) of his test hour between four and five o'clock the same afternoon. The small committee arranging the experiment agreed, and he then informed his audience that he would return at 4:36, at the same time synchronizing his watch with the bank clock. Houdini could not help noticing the puzzled looks exchanged between the President and the cashier, the only living persons who knew at what hour the room could be opened.

"Punctually at 4:36 Houdini arrived; walked straight up to the door of the strong-room; placed his back against it and said: 'Gentlemen, within one minute I will be on the other side of this door!'

"It can be imagined with what breathless interest the spectators counted the ensuing seconds. Some pulled out their watches to assure themselves that Houdini would be literally as good as his word.

"Almost on the tick of the sixtieth second, there was a whirring noise from the interior of the room and the bolts could be heard being automatically withdrawn. It was the work of a moment for Houdini to swing open the door and enter the strong-room—to the intense amazement of the spectators, and to the no less astonishment of the President and his cashier, who are probably wondering to this day how Houdini discovered the exact time the lock would function. The secret was divulged some years ago to a select few. My readers have the choice of telepathy, coincidence, or some unconscious psychic power on the part of Houdini to explain the curious incident I have just recorded."

Answer

As my work consists of a willing acknowledgment of manipulation, and as I accomplish it by my knowledge of the construction of locks, I do not believe you would ask me to expose my secrets. However, any time that you meet me personally, I will explain how I opened the time lock, but I do not care to broadcast this information at the present time.

No. 4

New York, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Houdini:

Perhaps you are familiar with the story of the play, "Outward Bound," now running in this city. I saw the play and enjoyed it very much. I quote you the comments of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle on this play:

"In the main, it was a remarkably accurate presentation of one aspect of the life after death. On the narrow stage of the steamship were shown a number of people who were dead, but who did not know that they were dead. That sometimes happens. Another correct feature was the absence of change in personal appearance. There is one bad line in the play, and that is where Scrubby, the wonderful steward, on being asked if there is any wireless on board, replies, 'No, we have no wireless.' He should have said, 'The receivers are all out of order.' That would have been true. Those who had passed over could send to us. but too often we had not sufficient knowledge to receive or to understand their signals."

Now, I am thoroughly satisfied in my mind that Sir Arthur is sincere in his work. I do not distinctly remember the lines from the play quoted above, but I am of the opinion that Doyle is right. I have read all of his works on psychic phenomena and kindred subjects, and must say that he is almost invulnerable to attack, except from the point of veracity as to his actual experiences, and I would not accuse him of misstating what he actually thinks he has seen or heard.

Invariably the name of Doyle comes up during a discussion of psychic phenomena or spiritualism. The "anti's" generally say, "Doyle is wrong." But why don't they say "Doyle is wrong as are Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir William Crookes, Lombroso, and others"?

Despite every conceivable effort to kill it, spiritualism lives and will continue to live. The religion of spiritualism is an ideal one. Its followers are legion, and this religion offers the one and only solution to the end of religious and race hatred. I do not deny that there are a great many charlatans and frauds practising under its cloak, and this is deplored by the many honest and sincere followers.

I am curious to hear your views on sleep. Do you think that when you lie down and fall asleep (you cannot remember the moment you do) that you pass from one state of existence into another?

Thanking you for any attention you may care to give this, I am, cordially yours. C. D.

Answer

You are mistaken when you suggest that the "anti's" generally single out Doyle, for they do say that the rest of the scientists who support spiritualism are also mistaken. Look up the mistakes made by Sir William Crookes; read the "Quarterly of Science" for 1874; read Prof. Zollmer's description of his seance with Dr. Henry Slade (there is no doubt that Slade misrepresented, and I hold his written confession, which has never been published, but which you will find in my new book, "A Magician Among the Spirits"). Read Prof. Richet's book, just off the press, "Thirty Years of Investigations." He speaks of clairvoyants, and ranks as genuine some mediums whom I have personally investigated, and whom I found cheating. They could never pass a legitimate test.

I agree with you that the religion of spiritualism is an ideal one. I do not say that there is no such thing. I am perfectly willing to be converted. My

mind is open, and I am not attacking spiritualism as a religion, but only attacking the fraud mediums and the miracle mongers.

You ask for my views on sleep. Strange to say, we spend almost a third of our lives in this peaceful state. Some humans require more sleep than others. I rarely take more than six or seven hours out of the twenty-four. I use sleep as a necessity; others as a luxury; and still others as a life-waster. There are a number of books on the subject. I believe that sleep rests the energy of life, and that the tenant (yourself) who occupies your body permits the landlord (nature) to make repairs in your abode while you sleep. If human beings would realize that they hold only a limited lease on their bodies, then they would not abuse them so unknowingly.

No. 5

Columbia, Mo.

Dear Mr. Houdini:

Do you believe that a person who suddenly lost a very dear friend would naturally be in a better position to communicate with the departed than one less acquainted, if there actually is such a thing as communication wth the dead?

H. J.

Answer

Yes, I positively believe that any person who has lost a dear friend or relative would be in a much better position to communicate with the lost one. I think that is why the shock of suddenly losing beloved ones often causes persons to imagine things.

No. 6

Erie, Pa.

Dear Sir:

Have you ever heard of John Slater, whose home was in California? I think he is the man who comes to Lilly Dale, N. Y. every summer and lectures and gives readings. What do you think of his work? D. W. N.

Answer

You ask my opinion of John Slater. What do you mean, as a human being, as a clairvoyant, as a spiritualistic-evangelist, or as an impossible lecturer before a high-grade audience?

No. 7

Harrisburg, Pa.

Dear Mr. Houdini:

In the first installment of your story, "The Spirit Fakers of Hermannstadt," you state that you were playing Vienna at the time. If I am not mistaken, I had the pleasure of viewing one of your performances, though it might have been in Berlin. I was very much interested in the story, and, knowing as I do the superstitions of those people, I can appreciate the predicament you were placed in. I await your further experiences with interest. V. L. Deb.

Answer

Yes, I have appeared in Berlin a number of times. My first appearance there was at the Berlin Winter Garden about twenty-five years ago. I played there consecutively for almost fifteen years, and was then brought back as a feature of the Hippodrome Circus by Director Busch. As a matter of record, I have played almost every principal city in the world, except in South Africa and South America.

No. 8

Montreal, P. Q.

Dear Sir:

It seems a trait peculiar to magicians to make war against the religion of spiritualism. Despite the incessant warfare it has lived through, it stands today on firm foundation, and has marked a steady growth.

The writer is a native of Scotland and has had the pleasure of seeing you perform on several occasions abroad. I want to relate to you the facts of a "so-called" exposure of spiritualists in Glasgow in February, 1878. Some of them are a trifle vague and for this reason I refer to the book of James Robertson entitled "Spiritualism, The Open Door of the Unseen Universe," for authenticity. This experience I have found to be general among so-called "exposes."

"No man was ever more liberal in speech and condemned intolerance with a louder voice than Professor Huxley, who certainly was one of the strongest forces of the age. Nothwithstanding his clearheadedness, he became the dupe of a vulgar American showman, and for a time allowed prejudice to dominate his reasoning faculties. Though he had said that 'no event is too extraordinary to be impossible,' yet he would never open his mind to the possibility of spiritual phenomena being true. It was beyond the extraordinary. He had refused to investigate the subject when the Dialectical Society called for his presence, saying, 'If it is true, it does not interest me.' He had repeated the same sentiments to Alfred Russel Wallace; yet, when he heard there was a person in America who was prepared to expose the whole matter, he opened his arms wide to receive him. The clever American played his cards well—so well as to dupe the most intellectual man in the country. The story he fabricated was greedily accepted. He said he had had a dear friend who, while in a state of feeble health, had fallen into the hands of the spiritualists and become insane. Roused by the wrongs done to this friend, his sole mission was to execute vengeance by exposing the arts by which the imposture was practised on the softheaded and credulous portion of the American and British public. He had succeeded in discovering the vulgar but skilfully veiled secrets, and now stern virtue called upon him to lay bare to the world the full explanation of the frauds. Robert Dale Owen had been a credulous fool, Professor Crookes a weak-minded dupe, Professor de Morgan a person without brains, and Alfred Russel Wallace and Cromwell Varley were blinded and incapable observers. The great American high-souled gentleman of independent fortune was mightier than all the scientific and literary men who had attested the truths of spiritual phenomena. He had grappled with the mystery, and for humanity's sake alone had come out into the open with a clean soul to do the world a great service.

"No one thought of asking for his credentials. So hateful was the word spiritualism that they swallowed his story without questioning about the dear friend who had been caught in its toils, and the independent means of the high-souled and spirited exposer. The opponents of spiritualism were only too overjoyed to find a missile to hurl at it and its supporters. Huxley was delighted, and patronized the arrant quack in London. Genuine phenomena could not interest him; the spurious claimed his attention at once. The crafty American, who could not impose on the spiritualists of America, found a fruitful field on English soil. Huxley wrote to some of the professors of the Glasgow and Edinburgh universities, asking them to take this great champion of truth under their wing. How much the showman did to pull the strings himself is not known, but in February, 1879, the Glasgow newspapers were flooded with long advertisements to the effect that Washington Irving Bishop, 'B. A.'—which I should read 'Bold Adventurer'—had been invited by the prominent men of Glasgow to give a startling exposure of spiritualism, an exposition by human means of all the startling manifestations claimed by spiritualists to be done by the spirits of the dead. The man of ordinary capacity could scarcely have read the flaming announcements without seeing that here was a showman pure and simple, who knew his business, knew how to bring out telling headlines so as to draw the public.

"In case all who were interested might not have a chance of seeing for themselves how feeble minds could be im-

posed upon, two nights were to be devoted to this noble attempt to save the world from credulity and folly. The prices of admission were 5s, 3s, 6d, 2s, and a few 1s seats; but as money was far from the object in view, it was reiterated in every corner that the vindication of truth and the saving of the weak-minded was the sole aim this gentleman of independent means had in coming to Glasgow. All the proceeds were to be devoted to the Western Infirmary.

"It will scarcely be credited that amongst the names of those who signed the requisite document which brought this adventurer into our midst were John Caird, the venerated principal of the university, and his scholarly brother Edward, now master of Balliol College, Oxford; Professor Berry, afterwards sheriff of Lanarkshire; Professors Blackburn, Buchanan, Clelland, Cowan, Dickson, Veitch, Grant, Jebb, Nicol, and Sir William Gardner, who had said clairvoyance came from a diseased condition of the faculty of wonder, whatever oracular meaning this might have. The most prominent advocate and supporter of the man Bishop, however, was Sir William Thomson, now Lord Kelvin. A few years later he acted even more ridiculously than that opponent of Galileo, the professor of philosophy of Padua, of whom I have spoken. Mr. Stead had asked Lord Kelvin to interest himself in borderland subjects, but he replied: 'I have nothing to do with borderland. I believe that nearly everything in hypnotism and clairvoyance is imposture, and the rest bad observation.' Mr. Stead very aptly says: 'This oracular dictum will probably live in the history of the progress of mankind side by side with the equally positive assertions of the Lord Kelvins of their day in condemnation of Galvani and of Harvey, whose discovery of the circulation of the blood exposed him to the ridicule of the leading scientists of his time.'

"It was not the university professors alone who interested themselves in Irving Bishop's beneficent work of exploding what they considered—if they considered the matter at all—a hurtful fallacy, but all sections of the church, the defenders of ancient superstitions, were determined that no new claimant should ever enter the field. So we had Archbishop Eyre and the Father Munro, as representatives of that church which has ever sought to stifle everything new. The Established Church had its representative in Dr. Burns, of the Cathedral, while the Free Church had its liberal Marcus Dods, Ross Taylor and others. Episcopalians and United Presbyterians had also their share in the great honor of extending the invitation to the marvelous, self-sacrificing and truth-devoted man of independent means who was to put an end to the existence of spiritualism.

"The night came when the so-called spirit manifestations, which had for so long eluded the detection and imposed upon the credulity of men, would be laid bare. Lord Kelvin, who never, I suppose, attended a genuine spirit circle in his life, was in the chair, and helped the magician just as boys carry out the instructions of the showman at juggling and mesmeric entertainments. He had crowds of his educated colleagues with him, who seemed to enjoy what was presented. Those in the audience who had seen good conjuring thought it a most tame exhibition of legerdemain, but the prominent names on the committee carried it through. There was no exposition of clairvoyance, materialization or rapping, only an exposition of the folly of learned professors. The spiritualists present laughed at the clumsy performance, and if it had been repeated for years it could not have affected the beliefs of a single spiritualist. There had been many conjurers who, with the aid of machinery, had done some clever things which caused people to wonder; but Irving Bishop was a man who had not even well learned his business.

"I wondered what the newspapers would say the next day, and for once I was ashamed of the press. I recollect reading a leading article in the 'Evening Times' of the period, and saying to myself, 'This leader will be quoted some day as an example of the ignorant and bigoted spirit which prevailed.' I recently took the trouble to hunt it up in the Mitchell Library, and there it was, as I had remembered it. In these days when men like Sir Oliver Lodge, Professor Richet, F. W. H. Myers, and others, have spoken out so clearly as to the objective reality of the phenomena, it looks as if it had been dug out of some ancient manuscript.

" 'Maniacs, illusions, and impostures are difficult to kill. It is doubtful whether the startling exposure which Washington Irving Bishop is giving of the thing called modern spiritualism, the silliest delusion and wickedest imposture of our time, will be its death-blow in Glasgow. With few exceptions, the immense audience assembled did not require to be convinced of the supreme humbug of spiritualism. They want to see the barefaced lie exposed by a clever man, who has sounded all its miserable shallows, pretty much as they would go to see an infamous scoundrel exposed in a court of law. Mr. Bishop is an American of independent means, whose dear friend, while in a state of feeble health, fell into the fangs of the spiritualists and became insane under their precious trickeries. He has succeeded in discovering their vulgar but skilfully-veiled secrets, and is engaged in laying them bare to the world.'

"Then we had a description of the tricks which had been the stock-in-trade of the regular conjurer for years. Lord Kelvin's appropriate remarks regarding the pernicious influence of the delusion are quoted, as being masterful and conclusive, and the leader concludes with these words: 'A few presumably strong men have had their brains softened by seriously touching the imposture.' (I suppose Sir William Crookes, Wallace, and Varley were meant?) 'Mr. Bishop's crusade may help to clear the noxious vapours from the eyes and minds of a few.'

"There were two nights of the show, and at the conclusion the Western Infirmary naturally waited for the proceeds with which the benevolent American was to dower them; but professors and infirmary had alike been sold. Mr. Bishop was needy, and had made sure that his own people would draw the money, and that he would keep it, once it was drawn. He cooly pocketed the entire proceeds, several hundred pounds, less some twenty pounds or so as their share of the spoil. All had been duped alike. It was a clever swindle. The professors and clergymen, and the potent assertion of independent means and avenging his dear friend's wrongs, had the desired effect with the public, and the modern Cagliostro rushed away with the 'takings,' leaving his silly dupes lamenting. It had been sufficient for Mr. Bishop to seem good and excellent, and although his credentials would not have stood any test, the eager desire on the part of the learned to believe anything unfavorable to spiritualism made them liable to fall into the net which he had prepared.

"The press had little to say about the robbery when it was found out. The matter was never fully opened to public gaze, and was soon forgotten. Professor Huxley would be blamed, no doubt, for introducing such an arrant knave to respectable Glasgow society." McN.

Answer

You are wrong. Magicians do not war against the religion of spiritualism, but against fraud mediums and miracle mongers. I do not deny that there may be honest mediums, but in my investigations of more than a quarter of a century I have never found any medium who stood the acid test of a legitimate in-

vestigation by experienced men who have met all qualifications to be justly termed investigators.

A scientist is not always qualified to be on the investigating committee; in fact, I believe that his trained mentality really disqualifies him until he has been initiated in the general manipulation of fraud mediums' tricks. I could name a number of our brilliant men who have been deceived and cheated by the simplest tricks; therefore it does not surprise me that the scientific men you mention were fooled, or rather taken advantage of, by Bishop.

I know the history of Bishop, the mind reader. He met his death in a peculiar manner in New York City some thirty years ago. If I remember correctly, it was in the Green Room Club, and he had just given a demonstration of locating hidden articles when he fell into a cataleptic fit. Despite the fact that he carried in his pocket letters of instruction that his mother was to be notified in case of his sudden death and that under no circumstances was any operation to be performed upon him without permission, the surgeons held an autopsy on his living body. Bishop's mother went to court when all this information became public, and you will find the entire proceedings in an article which I wrote for "Conjuror's Magazine," wherein you will find reproduced the photograph of the casket, with the body of Bishop, and his mother standing alongside. You can plainly see the incision, showing the complete upper part of his skull separated from the lower part. His mother stooped over to kiss his forehead, when the entire upper portion fell away. This must have deranged her mind, for she became somewhat eccentric. As she was in want, several of my friends supplied her with the necessities of life, until she passed away in Rochester.

The Countess Nicholas, Bishop's mother, had in some way befriended a man whose property was seized during the Civil War, and who claimed immense property in the South, with accumulated interest that amounted to more than a hundred million dollars. Countess Nicholas claimed this was given to her by this friend, and at her death I was willed thirty million dollars. Unfortunately, up to the present day I have been unable to find out how substantial or mythical this fortune is. Upon investigation I have found that the fortune part of the story is true, but it has been outlawed by the years.

Bishop was never looked upon as a genuine mind reader, but purely and simply as a muscle reader and imitator of J. Randall Brown, who is still alive. Stewart Cumberland was the best known of the muscle readers, and I knew him intimately. During Bishop's visit with the Czar and Czarina of Russia, Bishop found out their willingness to believe in spiritualism, and he received valuable jewelry as a token of their esteem, and for his entertainments. He had a controversy with the editor of the "London Truth," in which he came out second best, but he audaciously advertised that he had won.

You mention Bishop, but you overlook the splendid service rendered by the English magician Maskelyne, who exposed every charlatan in the past forty years and never once failed to show the deception. Mediums do not like magicians at their seances, claiming that they are a disturbing element, but what could ten thousand magicians do in front of a radio machine? Nothing, except express their amazement at one of the great inventions of our time.

No. 9

San Francisco, Cal.

Dear Houdini:

You say that you want to expose fraud mediums. But are there not also legitimate mediums, who can stand every test imposed on them?

Answer

Perhaps there are such, but I have never met any. To show you how difficult it is to find a genuine medium, let us go back to 1857, when the "Boston Courier" offered $500 for a medium who could successfully meet the test. Such offers have been repeatedly made since, and a similar offer was backed up by the $60,000 willed to the University of Pennsylvania by Henry Sybert. In rough figures, during the past sixty years there has been offered almost one hundred thousand dollars for a medium who could meet a genuine test, yet no one has ever been granted any bonus for meeting such a test.

No. 10

Brooklyn, N. Y.

Dear Sir:

Perhaps the question that I have in mind does not come under the category named in WEIRD TALES as psychic, but, knowing of the extensive library that you possess pertaining to magic and kindred subjects, I am confident that I may obtain from you what I am unable to find elsewhere. In Eliphas Levi's works on transcendental magic and other books of similar character I meet with frequent references to the ritual of the "Black Mass." Nowhere can I find a detailed description of that ritual, and as I am attempting to compile a history of human superstition, I am desirous of obtaining the entire ritual, rather than attempting to piece together such fragments as I have been able to glean from the New York Public Library. I enclose postage for return answer if I may hope for a personal reply, otherwise allow me to thank you very cordially for the answer through the medium of WEIRD TALES. May I, as a constant reader of your magazine, offer my appreciation as such for your contribution to that periodical. R. G. R.

Answer

Rarely will you find reference to the "Black Mass." My opinion is that it is a sort of convention of devils, and there the witches, wizards and sorcerers confess. This is supposed to take place on the Devil's Sabbath.

I have never seen a complete description of their rituals. Spence, in his "Occult Encyclopedia," gives very little information on this subject.

I remember reading a description of the "Black Mass" and the rituals. Some of it, if my memory serves me right, was photographed in Sweden, and was of such a nature that the picture, which cost a fortune, has never been seen by the public. It was called, I believe, "Superstition of the Ages." I saw this film run, but up to the present time it has never been seen outside of a private projection room. It took more than two years to make it.

According to Funk & Wagnalls, "Black Mass" is a burlesque on the Christian mass.

No. 11

Daytona Beach, Fla.

Dear Mr. Houdini:

I would appreciate it very much if you could tell me if Swami Bhakta Vishita, Hindoo master and author of "The Development of Seership, Hindoo and other Oriental Methods" (and I believe other books), has or has not been found to be a fraud. If he has not been found to be a fraud, I would thank you very much to let me know the titles of his other books, and in what order they follow each other and where they can be had. I accidentally got hold of his book on seership and became greatly interested. In fact I am making a study of his methods, and if he is not a fraud I would like to get more of his works; but if he is known to be a fraud I will waste no more time on him. Hence my questions.

Now another question. A lady came here this winter from Lilly Dale, N. Y., and has been conducting a spiritualist church in the Moose Hall in Daytona, Fla., all the season. I have attended it,

and she professes to be a medium, or mediumistic. I would like to ask if she is a fraud.

Any works that you could recommend to me on the occult or psychic order would be appreciated very much (I mean reliable ones, of course).

N. S. J.

Answer

Hindoo psychics in all branches are the most to be guarded against. I do not know what good it will do you to read their books, unless you are able to read upon them and eventually refute their teachings. If anyone of them possessed one-third of the power the Hindoo psychics all claim to possess, he could come forward and claim the huge rewards awaiting true psychics. This applies to all who did not come forward for the public test. Incidentally, you mention Lilly Dale. That is the breeding place for psychic fanatics, who are consciously and subconsciously frauds.

No. 12

Lewistown, Mont.

Dear Sirs:

I am writing you one of my actual experiences.

One day when I was in the age between seventeen and eighteen I was riding a horse on my uncle's ranch and I had an experience I shall never forget. It was late in the evening. I was riding around a bunch of pine trees, when my horse shied and just about threw me. I looked into the pine trees and saw a figure which resembled a human hanging on a limb of a big tree. Its hands were tied behind its back and a rope was around its neck.

The air seemed funny all around those pines. It seemed moldy. I spurred my horse closer and got off. I walked nearer and the thing vanished as if it went into thin air. Chills began to run up and down my spine.

I lost no time in getting to my horse and galloping for home. When I got home I told my uncle about it. He would not believe me. So several days later he was riding by there about dusk and he saw it also. When he got home he was all excited about it and asked the hired men if they had seen it, but all of them said they had not.

One day our neighbor rode over to the ranch and said there was a dead man hanging over in a group of pines. All the men at our ranch went over there, but it was gone when they got there.

One day when I was riding around, I went over to the cabin of an old trapper who went by the name of "Big Dick." His right name was Robert Holt. I told him about it, and he said that he would wait till dusk and then go over there.

When dusk came we went over and it was there. He walked up to it and was going to touch it with a stick when a dog jumped out from a clump of bushes and made a snap at Dick's hand. Dick jumped back and screamed. Out of the dog's mouth came a tongue of fire that burned for a moment and went out, but the dog continued to show its teeth and snarl. Its eyes glowed like fire. But the body of the man vanished, then the dog seemed to leap into the air and vanish.

I had stood there all the while watching with my mouth wide open and chills running up and down my spine. After a while I came out of it and began to talk to Dick. Then he asked, "What do you think of that?" I said that I did not know what to think. He caught his horse and said he had seen enough of that thing for a while.

I learned afterwards that a horsethief had been caught and hanged there about thirty years before, and that he had a dog with him, and that a cattleman had said, "We might as well kill his dog, too, so we will be rid of all of his relations forever." They left him and his dog both dead by the tree. Neither he nor his dog was ever buried. J. P.

Answer

Your narration seems like the creation of the fertile mind of fiction. It savors strongly of "The Hound of the Baskervilles" by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

I should say that time, place and general environment were favorable to vivid imaginations, and that no better field for action could have been selected than a pine grove on a dark night. It is not difficult to conjecture that witnesses such as you cite are of the type most susceptible to superstitious influences.

I have slept in cemeteries, I should say at least two dozen times; and my imagination caused me to think that the place was peopled, and every moment I expected to have a host of the shadows come up and mock me.

My father, who also investigated phenomena, and who was one of the pioneers in 1848, related a story that in his student days one of the boys in his class had to drive a nail in a wooden cross at midnight in the local cemetery, and as he turned to flee, a hand reached out and held him fast. He shrieked and shouted for help, screaming out that he was held by a ghostly hand, but by the time assistance arrived, he was dead on the grave. It appears that in driving the nail in, he had accidentally, in his excitement, nailed down the coat. His mind had conjectured a hand reaching out from the grave and securing him. There is no doubt that your mind conjured up the things you write in your letter.

My father also told of a hazing, at which a man was going through a certain ordeal, and he was supposed to have his head cut off, so his hazers struck him with a towel soaked in ice-water, and he was worked up to such a pitch that he died of the shock.

About six months ago a man was arrested in Berlin for a "thought murder." Every morning he had called up his rival, a butcher, who had consumption, and asked him if he were not dead yet. This preyed so on the butcher's mind that it actually hastened his death. The man who had harassed him was put on trial, as witnesses claimed that the sick man was really killed by the very thought of expecting this call every morning.

No. 13

Grand Rapids, Mich.

Dear Sir:

Propaganda, what misery is created in thy name! Having read your department in WEIRD TALES, I want to say that I consider it propaganda, because, why not attack Catholicism or the Jewish religion or some of the other isms also, whilst you are out on this campaign? But no, it must be spiritualism!

I wonder if you realize what glorious wisdom and philosophy may be attained through this same spiritualism. You are looking at the physical and psychic phenomena side of the angle, but I am looking from a spiritual standpoint. Mr. Houdini, I am sure you are committing a grievous error, because I know there are genuine mediums, as well as quacks. Not all resort to trickery, I would have you know. There are frauds in all things, at every turn in life, but whatever ye are seeking, that shall ye also find.

I know of many people with the same turn of mind as yourself, and, knowing the value of thought forces (a knowledge taken from oriental occultism), I know they can produce, whilst sitting in a seance, disastrous results to all concerned. If they would study chemistry, astronomy, physiology and psychometry as well as the human brain, they would not be up to such school-boy pranks.

I can explain that the raising of the trumpet and various articles during a seance is accomplished by a force, electrical-magnetic, thrown out from the medium or the bodies of the sitters, and this produces levitation, and the voices supposed to come from the medium, or confederates, as you so wish to term

(Continued on page 174)

Why TRY to Treat Piles from the Outside?

You Can Not *Possibly* Reach the Real Trouble with Ointments, Salves, Dilators or Other Local Treatments—They May Ease for the Moment, But Can Never Heal Where They Can Never Reach.

Don't Submit to an Operation—Until You Have Tried Our Easy and Sensible Treatment

No matter how severe your case may be, or of how long standing. The old, stubborn cases, that are supposed to be "incurable" are the very ones we like best to write to us—for we can nearly always count upon those people to be our best friends and boosters after this treatment has made them well.

Neither does it matter where you live nor what your occupation may be—we are as near to you as your mail box, and if you are troubled with piles, this method will give you quick relief and within a short time you will have joined the ranks of the thousands who write us that they feel themselves to be permanently cured.

We want you to understand that the Page Method is DIFFERENT from all others and that it is the ONE MOST RELIABLE and SUREST remedy for the home treatment of piles. Send the coupon NOW while you have the matter in mind and this offer before you.

Don't let anyone persuade you to submit to an operation until you have at least given this internal method a trial and a chance to cure you. A few days' delay will not make your case much harder for the surgeon, and you may not need him at all.

Just Chew This Pleasant Tablet

Money Can Not Buy Many Pleasures for the Man or Woman Suffering from Piles.

There are times when the Certain Relief Afforded by the PAGE PILE TREATMENT Is Worth All the Money in a Bank

We Can *Prove* Every Statement That We Make

There is only one sensible, sure and Safe way to treat piles and prevent them from coming back every few weeks to annoy and pain you again. This is by permanently healing them with the Page INTERNAL Treatment. While the Page treatment includes both an ointment and bowel regulator, we tell you frankly and honestly in our directions that these will give but temporary relief—But that PERMANENT Benefit will come from the Page Pile Tablet. This is a very pleasant tasting tablet and you will enjoy chewing one or two after meals. This System for the Cure of Piles has been sold for More Than a Quarter of a Century and is endorsed in Thousands of Letters Reporting the Cure of cases that seemed beyond hope of relief:

Let Us Send You a Trial Package Absolutely Free. Just Send Us Your Address and Name on the Coupon.

This method of treating Piles, from the INSIDE instead of the OUTSIDE, is not a new idea or something that has not been given a thorough test. We quote below a letter received from a patient who suffered from piles for 25 years before trying our method of treatment.

The one BIG recommendation of this method of treatment is the PERMANENCY of the benefits derived.

Don't put off the matter of sending the Coupon, for it will be much better to have this sure relief right at hand the next time your piles bother you than to hunt around for our address and then wait two or three days for the package to reach you. So send your name and address NOW, to E. R. Page Co., 337-C Page Bldg., Marshall, Mich.

Had Both Protruding and Bleeding Piles

Mr. E. R. Page, Marshall, Mich.

Dear Sir:—I am glad to say your medicine has helped me and the last package has cured me. I have been two months without any medicine and have done a lot of hard work since. It is a wonderful remedy. When I sent for the first treatment I was not able to be on my feet and suffered terribly. It was the protruding and bleeding Piles together. At night I could not rest and I had given up to have an operation; but read of this remedy and so I gave it a trial. It has saved me from a lot of suffering and also many dollars. I can't say enough to praise the Page Pile Method. I am glad there is a remedy for piles as I do not think much of these operations. I am feeling fine and glad I found out about your wonderful medicine. Will always recommend it.

Yours respectfully,
MRS. NINA YOUNGBLOOD.
Box 183. Sparta. Mich.

Cured After 15 Years

E. R. Page, Mgr.

Dear Sir:—I am surely pleased for finding your treatment for the piles. I suffered with them for 15 years and was cured by using your treatment. I certainly will always speak a good word for your treatment and you can use my name in any way you wish.

Sincerely yours,
WILEY HILL.
Box 73. Cliffview. Va.

Case of Long Standing

E. R. Page Co., Marshall, Mich.

Dear Sir:—Mrs. Vincent can't thank you enough, for you have got the very medicine to cure Piles. Mrs. Vincent has had bleeding piles for 40 years. I am glad we saw your ad and got the medicine, for it is a sure cure when it will cure a case like my wife had.

Gratefully.
M. J. VINCENT.
1140 Drake St.. Madison. Wis.

Something Wonderful

E. R. Page Co., Marshall, Mich.

Gentlemen:—I received your sample of the Pile remedy and was very well satisfied with it. But as my brother had some of your remedy he let me use it so I did not have to send for any. Your remedy has cured me of my piles. It sure is something wonderful. I also thank you for the sample. Your remedy helped me and I will advertise it as a very wonderful remedy.

Yours truly,
LOUISE ZISHKA.
Lakefield. Minn.

Coupon for Free Proof Package

E. R. Page Co.,
337-C Page Bldg., Marshall, Mich.

Without any cost or obligation on my part, please send me a trial package of your Combination Treatment for Piles.

Name _____

Address _____

Town _____ State _____

"Watch Out! The Cobra's Loose—"

"On a pedestal of gold stood a man-sized statue of some shining black substance. The face snarled in an expression of malignant hate, one foot was raised as if arrested in the performance of some obscene dance. Four arms sprouted from the thing's shoulders, one bearing a rod-like Yellow Robe's, one a tongue of flame, one a zig-zag lightning flash, and one a coiling serpent . . . . . As I looked, my breath went hot. The snake in the idol's hand moved, it twisted and writhed—IT WAS ALIVE!

"POUF! A glare of blinding flame shot through the room and the tang of acrid smoke bit our nostrils . . . . . 'O-o-o-o-h!' a woman in the crowd shrieked and fell writhing on the floor. Another screamed the alarm: 'The cobra! The other cobra's loose!' . . . . . "

A tense moment in

"The Bride of Siva"

A Mystery Novelette of Weird Thrills

By SEABURY QUINN

Published Complete in the June Issue of

REAL DETECTIVE TALES

And Mystery Stories

Hamilton Craigie Also Contributes a Complete Novelette to the June Issue—

"The House Without a Door"

An Exciting Story That Throbs with Action

And in the Same Issue There's a Third Novelette—

"The Broadcast Clue"

By CHARLES T. JORDAN

An Up-to-the-Minute Radio Detective Story

Nine Red-Blooded Short Stories ***Three Rapid-Fire Novelettes***

A Thrilling Serial Novel ***Two Unusual Departments***

And Many Short Articles

All in the Big June Issue of

REAL DETECTIVE TALES

And Mystery Stories

For Sale Everywhere ***Twenty-five Cents***

(Continued from page 172)

them, are actually from the realms of thought. The entities may control any part of the medium's body by working through, or manipulating, the leading nerve center leading to the part they wish to control. Hence they control the vocal organism and produce voices.

I could explain every phase of mediumship, Mr. Houdini, but it would take up too much of your time and you perhaps would not care to hear it anyway. I know there are positively genuine mediums, gifted with the same spiritual gifts as the prophets of old, for it is only a natural law, and God, dwelling within nature, makes His laws unchangeable. I had a good laugh over some of your explanations, for you explain things about spiritualism about as we would explain the wondrous mystifying tricks you perform.

There is something deep and intangible to it all, if we would only look at things with an unbiased vision. I suggest that the best thing for you to do would be to not dabble in something that pertains to the deeper sciences, if you are so afraid of becoming a victim of hallucinations or a candidate for the insane asylum. J. V.

Answer

Madame, there is $75,000 awaiting the person or medium who can substantiate your claims to the existence of so-called psychic or odic force, or that "entities" do or can control *anything* of a phenomenal nature.

With all due respect, I would say that my deepest sympathy is extended you, and, if you will pardon me, I would advise confining your thoughts to things of this mundane sphere.

Catholicism, the Jewish religion, and all orthodox religions are established on such facts of spiritual advantage to the human race that there is no comparison between them and a cult. Spiritualism was acknowledged to be a fraud by the Fox Sisters, inventors of the myth.

Must I keep repeating personally that I am not attacking any religion? I am simply giving the facts of my thirty years of experience as an investigator, and showing that up to the present time it has never come to my lot to meet a genuine medium, and you must concede that in thirty years I ought to run across someone who possesses these powers.

No. 14

Pittsburgh, Pa.

My dear Mr. Houdini:

I have read your little leaflet given at your performance on February 21 at Carnegie Hall, Pittsburgh, and will give

(Continued on page 177)

FREE! HARTMAN'S NEW BARGAIN CREDIT CATALOG

NO MONEY DOWN

No C. O. D. Nothing to Pay for Goods on Arrival

Here is the great Hartman Bargain Credit Catalog—the famous book from which millions of American homes have been beautifully furnished without a single cash payment down.

Buying from this book is just like opening a charge account at a local store except that instead of your entire bill coming due at the end of the month you have nearly a year to settle it.

Just send the coupon and **Hartman, the World's Largest Home Furnishing Concern,** will send your FREE copy filled with unparalleled bargains in **furniture,** rugs, carpets, sewing machines, washing machines, glassware, watches, silverware, dishes, cooking utensils, stoves, farm implements, etc.—everything you need to make the home complete, beautiful and comfortable.

Nearly a Year to Pay

Don't send a penny with your order, **don't pay a cent for the goods when they arrive.** No C.O.D. Use the goods as your own for 30 days. If not satisfied, **ship them back at Hartman's expense.** If you decide to keep them—then **take nearly a year** to pay the balance—a little every month without interest.

This is the common-sense way to furnish your home. There's no need for you to pay all cash at one time or to "save up" for a long time or to buy on short term credit. You will be amazed to see Hartman's bargain prices, which give every dollar the biggest possible purchasing power. Hartman pays millions of dollars to manufacturers every year. Buying in such tremendous quantities means low prices and Hartman sells to you on the same basis and saves you money on every purchase—then gives **you nearly a year to pay.**

Beautiful FREE Gifts

The Catalog shows not only thousands of bargains, but tells how you can get beautiful gifts of splendid articles in glassware, jewelry, dishes, silverware, toilet sets, table linens, etc. All given FREE with purchases.

Send for the FREE Catalog right now. It costs you nothing. Go through over 300 pages. 68 of them in actual colors. It's a treat you must not miss. Hartman sells not only credit, but quality. Open an easy payment charge account with Hartman.

Open An Easy Payment Charge Account With Hartman

"Let Hartman Feather YOUR Nest"

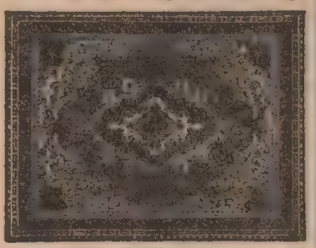
Over 300 Pages

68 Pages in Actual Colors

Some Examples of HOUSEHOLD BARGAINS Shown in Hartman's Wonderful Catalog

See pages 62 to 99 for Hartman's bargains in Bedroom Suites, Beds, Chifforettes, Chiffoniers, Dressers, Toilet Tables, and Chairs for the bedroom. Prices from $9 to $199. **No C. O. D. Nothing to Pay for Goods on Arrival. 30 Days' Free Trial. Nearly a Year to Pay.**

On pages 147 to 156 you will find pictures and descriptions of the choicest Dinnerware. Note the handsome designs, exquisite gold decorations and the splendid quality. Some sets have your initial in gold on every piece. Complete sets in any of these beautiful patterns range in price from $9.98 to $44.50. **No C. O. D. Nothing to Pay for Goods on Arrival. 30 Days' Free Trial. Nearly a Year to Pay.**



Rug and Carpet bargains are to be found on pages 159 to 179. Pictures in actual colors show the fascinating designs and the harmonious shades which enable you to select floor coverings to perfectly suit your taste. And they are fine, close, beautiful weaves which give years of service and satisfaction. Rug prices range from 93c to $79.65. **No C. O. D. Nothing to Pay for Goods on Arrival. 30 Days' Free Trial. Nearly a Year to Pay.**

Mail This Coupon Now!

Catalog Coupon

Hartman Furniture & Carpet Co.
Dept. 6413 Chicago, Illinois

Send me FREE, your big new Credit Catalog showing thousands of bargains on your no-money-in-advance easy credit terms and explaining your FREE GIFT PLAN.

Name.....
Street,
R. F. D., or
Box No.....
Town.....State.....

HARTMAN Furniture & Carpet Co.
Dept. 6413 Copyright, 1924, by Hartman's, Chicago **Chicago**
Largest Home Furnishing Concern in the World

This No-Money-Down Offer is Special to Readers of WEIRD TALES This Issue Only

Your Job!

Make it Pay You $70 to $200 a Week

Be a Certificated Electrical Expert

It's a shame for you to work for small pay when Trained "Electrical Experts" are in great demand at such high salaries, and the opportunities for advancement and a big success in this line are the greatest ever known. "Electrical Experts" earn $70 to $200 a week. Fit yourself for one of these big paying positions.

Learn at Home to Earn $12 to $30 a Day

Today even the ordinary Electrician—the "screwdriver" kind—is making money—big money. But it's the trained man—the man who knows the whys and wherefores of Electricity — the "Electrical Expert" — who is picked out to "boss" ordinary Electricians—to boss Big Jobs—the jobs that pay. You, too, can learn to fill one of these jobs —spare time only is needed. BE AN "ELECTRICAL EXPERT"—earn $70 to $200 a week.

Other Men Are Doing It— You Can Do It Too

J. R. Morgan of Delaware, Ohio, earns from $30.00 to $50.00 a day since completing my course. He used to earn $5.00 a day as a carpenter's helper. W. E. Pence, a $35.00 a week mechanic of Chehalis, Wash., made almost $10,000.00 last year doing electrical work in a town where he didn't think he could earn a dime. Harold Hastings, of Somers, Mass., only 21 years old, cleans up $480.00 a month. He was still in high school when he started on my course. Joe Cullari, 523 N. Clinton Ave., Trenton, N. J., increased his income 300% in one year and frequently makes the entire cost of his course back in one day's time. Fred Fritchman, 3959 Amundson Ave., New York City, makes $450.00 every month. He was a $15.00 a week man when he first came to me for help.

Age or Lack of Experience No Drawback

You don't have to be a College Man; you don't have to be a High School graduate. If you can read and write English, my course will make you a big success. It is the most simple, thorough and successful Electrical Course in existence, and offers every man, regardless of age, education, or previous experience, the chance to become in a very short time an "Electrical Expert," able to make from $70 to $200 a week.

I Give You a Real Training

As Chief Engineer of the Chicago Engineering Works, I know exactly the kind of training a man needs to get the best positions at the highest salaries. Hundred of my students are now earning $3,500 to $10,000 a year. Many are successful ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS.

Your Satisfaction Guaranteed

So sure am I that you can learn Electricity —so sure am I that after studying with me, you too, can get into the "big money" class in electrical work, that I will guarantee under bond to return every single penny paid me in tuition if, when you have finished my course, you are not satisfied it was the best investment you ever made.

Free Electrical Working Outfit, Radio Course Employment Service

I give each student a splendid Outfit of Electrical Tools, Materials and Measuring Instruments absolutely FREE. You do PRACTICAL work—AT HOME with this Outfit. You start right in after the first few lessons to WORK AT YOUR PROFESSION in a practical way. I also give free a complete Radio course and a special course for men going into business for themselves.

Get Started Now — MAIL COUPON

I want to send the "Vital Facts" of the Electrical Industry including my Electrical Book, Proof Lessons and a sample of my guarantee bond FREE. These cost you nothing and you'll enjoy them. Make the start today for a bright future in Electricity. Send in the coupon — NOW.

L. L. COOKE, Chief Engineer
Chicago Engineering Works
Dept. 1749—2150 Lawrence Ave., Chicago

Use this Free Outfit Coupon!

L. L. COOKE, Chief Engineer
Chicago Engineering Works, Dept. 1749
2150 Lawrence Avenue, Chicago, Illinois

Dear Sir:—Send me at once the "Vital Facts" containing Sample Lessons, your Big Book and full particulars of your Free Outfit and Home Study Course —all fully prepaid, without obligation on my part.

Name.....

Address.....

City and State.....

Occupation.....Age.....

The "Cooke" Trained Man is the "Big Pay" Man

$18 per day for you

Yes, sir, $95 every week taking orders everywhere for
Mansfield Measure-Made Caps
Mansfield Caps are tailored to measure in exact style and fabric customer wants. Better than store caps — but no higher. Quick sale. We deliver direct to wearer and collect. Big profits in advance.
A Free Cap for You
Write for order-taking outfit and free cap offer.
Mansfield Cap Makers
Dept. R-5 Cincinnati, O.

EARN BIG PROFITS
Selling Electrical Appliances
WE START YOU OUT
The electrical industry is yet merely in its infancy. Get in on the ground floor of a dignified, interesting and profitable business. Steady income, pleasant, easy, demonstrating Violet Rays and electrical appliances which sell on sight. Experience not required. MEN and WOMEN earn big money, spare or all time. Salary to producers. Commissions liberal in advance. We deliver and collect. Write for exclusive territory. VI-REX CO., Dept. A-62, Chicago.

GET RID OF YOUR FAT
Free Trial Treatment
Sent on request. Ask for my "pay-when-reduced" offer. I have successfully reduced thousands of persons, often at the rate of a pound a day, without diet or exercise. Let me send you proof at my expense.
DR. R. NEWMAN, Licensed Physician
State of New York, 286 Fifth Ave., N. Y., Desk M

Pimples
Your skin can be quickly cleared of Pimples, Blackheads, Acne Eruptions on the face or body, Barbers Itch, Eczema, Enlarged Pores, Oily or Shiny Skin.
FREE Write today for my FREE Booklet, "A CLEAR-TONE SKIN," telling how I cured myself after being afflicted for 15 years.
$1000 Cash says I can clear your skin of the above blemishes.
E. S. GIVENS, 137 Chemical Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

TOBACCO HABIT
CURED OR NO PAY
Any form, cigars, cigarettes, pipe, chewing or snuff. Full treatment sent on trial. Harmless. Costs $1.00 if it cures. Nothing if it fails. Used by over 400,000 men and women.
SUPERBA COMPANY L 4, BALTIMORE, MD.

ART STUDIES
Original and genuine photographs of real beauties

12	Photographs 3½x5½	$1.00
40	Photographs 3½x5½	2.50
13	Photographs 8x10	5.00
160	Miniature Samples	1.00

Howard Sales Company
Dept. 4, 1154 Folsom St.
San Francisco, Cal.

GOITRE Pay When Well

I have an honest, proven remedy for goitre (big neck). It checks the growth at once, reduces the enlargement, stops pain and distress and relieves in a little while. Pay when well. Tell your friends about this. Write me at once. DR. ROCK,
Dept 410 Box 737. Milwaukee, Wis.

LADIES Free booklet describing our Home-Treatment remedies, etc., used by thousands of women. Enclose stamp. ACME SALES CO., DEPT. 18, Empire Bldg., Denver, Colo.

LADIES DON'T WORRY
Victor Monthly Tablets relieve longest, most stubborn abnormal cases quickly or money refunded. Harmless, Painless. No interference with work. Sealed in plain wrapper. $1.25 prepaid. VICTOR REMEDY CO., 6442 Ellis Ave., A-16, CHICAGO

(Continued from page 174)

you my impression. I had read press notices and other advertising about the performance (had not seen you before), and was particularly induced to go by the announcement that spiritualistic deceit, treachery and falsehood would be exposed. I must say I was greatly disappointed. While you did ridicule spiritualism to some extent, yet your talk lacked all convincing argument, also any comprehensive exposure of methods employed by the mediums, etc. Your talk impressed me as being irrelevant, and you appeared reluctant in dealing with the subject at hand. There may be some cause for this, and I can readily understand your position from a business standpoint. For the enlightened, your appearance may be somewhat encouraging, but for the ignorant spiritualistic believer you do not demolish any fences. All in all, I went away dissatisfied. This is written in a kindly spirit, and probably I expected a too aggressive lecturer. E. H.

Answer

I do not understand why you should be disappointed, because during my lecture I permitted the audience to bombard me with questions, and if there was anything you would like to have known, why didn't you hurl it at me?

I want to thank you for the spirit in which your letter was written.

There is no such thing as a comprehensive exposure of fraud. All exposures are admitted by the faithful as being tricks, whereas they insist that the identical effect as produced by a medium is genuine phenomena. If there is any particular phase that you would like to have explained, I think I can give you the explanation.

No. 15

Erie, Pa.

Dear Mr. Houdini:

The writer wishes to congratulate you on the wonderful delivery of your lecture in our town on February 22. I should like to hear from you whether you can conceive such a thing as creation. The writer considers you one of the master minds of the world, and I am therefore appealing to your intellectual knowledge and soliciting your ideas in the pure, naked form. As I am not considered one of the tender-skins, kindly reply openly.

I have an exceptionally intelligent friend by the name of Jacob Lomask, at 1521 State St., Erie, Pa. He is the gentleman that was upon the stage and addressed the audience at your permission. He is an ordained minister of the

(Continued on page 179)

SEND NO MONEY FOR THESE AUTOMATICS
Lowest Prices in the Country
20 SHOT MILITARY MODEL $8.45
32 cal. with Extra Magazine FREE
25 Cal 6 SHOT BLUE STEEL .. $ 6.65
25 Cal 8 SHOT MAUSER ..... $ 11.50
CYLINDER SWINGS OUT — Best Grade 6 SHOT HAND EJECTOR
32 Cal. $15.45 — 32-20 OR 38 Cal. $16.45
32 or 38 Cal. Break-Open REVOLVER $8.25
6 SHOT Hand Ejector
32 32-20 OR 38 Cal Specially Reduced $12.25
GENUINE GERMAN 30 Cal. 9 SHOT LUGER $16.25
Brand New Guns Use Standard Ammunition
Satisfaction Guaranteed or Money Refunded
Pay Postman Our Price Plus Postage
EDWARDS IMPORT TRADING CORP.
258 BROADWAY Dept. 444 NEW YORK CITY

Prices Reduced
On All Standard Make TYPEWRITERS

Lowest Prices in Years
We will ship any make you choose for one week's trial. Underwood, Royal, L. C. Smith, Remington, Oliver, etc.
Easy Terms Pay less than rent each month and own a typewriter. Guaranteed as good as new. Perfectly rebuilt by experts—the famous "Young Process." Send for our free trial offer and new low price list now. WRITE TODAY.
Young Typewriter Co.
World's Largest Dealers in Standard Typewriters
654 W. Randolph St., Dept. 1975 Chicago, Ill.

WANTED! RAILWAY MAIL CLERKS
Work for the Government
Men and Women 17 Years and Up
$1600 to $2600 a Year
Common Education Sufficient -- Travel, See the Country
No Lay-Offs -- Lifetime job -- Holidays With Pay
Write today for free list of positions obtainable and information how to get positions WITH UNCLE SAM.
Address Superintendent, 254 Dinan Bldg. DETROIT, MICH.

SEX EXPLAINED!
Sex truth at last. Dr. Cowan's book answers in plain understandable language all you want to know. "The SCIENCE OF A NEW LIFE" TELLS ABOUT: The Sex Appeal—Choosing a Mate—Blissful Marriage—HOW BABIES ARE CONCEIVED AND BORN—What to Avoid—Twilight Sleep—etc.. 408 pages illustrated.
THIS BOOK IS NOT FOR CHILDREN.
Special edition of this $3.00 book sent postpaid for $2.00. (C. O. D. 10c extra.)
OGILVIE PUB. CO.
57 Rose St., Dept. 90, New York City
SEXUAL — LOVE AND LIFE!

MAKE $25 to $75 WEEKLY AT HOME writing Show Cards at home in your spare time.

No canvassing. Simple instructions. No previous experience necessary. Write today for free particulars.
NATIONAL STUDIOS
Dept. 33, 6121 Dorchester Avenue, Chicago, Illinois

Personal To Women
Wonderful East Indian remedy. The only known cure for Leucorrhoea (whites). Used successfully for 25 years. Endorsed by thousands. Guaranteed. For full, confidential information, write
THE CARBO COMPANY, Dept. D, PEORIA, ILL.

"She's a Wonderful Girl-Jack-

But-your salary? Is it enough?
double it - triple it -
make her proud of you

earn $4,000 to $15,000 a year and up

Be a *Ward*

Trained Salesman

MONEY This message to you is about MONEY: money that "brings home the bacon"; money, for which people flatter us when we have it and when we haven't it, don't see us; money—round, hard, spendable dollars, that buy us what we want, when we want it; the kind that shows us the way to tie Old-man Hard-times to a fence-post and smile at him. You need this money—you want it—you know how to spend it. Let me show you HOW TO GET IT.

Jas. P. Ward—General Sales Manager.
"THE MAN WHO MAKES 'MONEY-MAKERS'"

Why is Mr. JAS. P. WARD "The Man Who Makes Money Makers?"

Mr. Ward has had a most remarkable selling career. His long, varied experience coupled with his intensive study has given him a wonderful knowledge of the science of selling.

Mr. Ward knows how to sell, as perhaps no other man, but it is his marvelous ability to impart this knowledge—his natural faculty of telling his student in a plain, easy to understand way, the **what** and **how** and **why** of **right selling**, that has made him so conspicuously successful as a Trainer of Salesmen. Mr. Ward not only knows how to sell, but he knows exactly the right way to teach it. That's why—he is "The Man Who Makes Money Makers."

Mr. Ward is at present General Sales Manager of the Manufacturers' Sales Corporation of America, President of the Rogers Park Trust and Savings Bank, also Vice-President and General Manager of the largest Manufacturing plant of its kind in the world—The Shipman-Ward Mfg. Co.—as well as President of the North Shore Park District for the City of Chicago.

FREE!

BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE COURSE
EMPLOYMENT SERVICE
"SELLING RIGHT"
—Monthly Sales Magazine
CONSULTATION SERVICE

SCISSORS HERE

Get This FREE Book Today
"THE RIGHT WAY TO SELL"

Jas. P. Ward—General Sales Manager
Manufacturers' Sales Corp. of America,
5225 Administration Bldg.,
1760-1774 Montrose Ave., Chicago, Ill.

Dear Sir: Send me your big Free book, "The Right Way to Sell"—and proof that I, too, can become a Big Money-Maker in Selling—all Free, and charges prepaid, without obligating me in any way.

Name _____

St. & No. _____ City _____

Occupation _____ State _____

This week you will earn $30—or $40 or maybe $50. This same week, as a Master Salesman with my training, YOU COULD HAVE MADE $100 to $250 and not worked a bit harder. In one week you lost from $50 to $150—in one year you lost $2,600 to $7,800. Why be satisfied with a future of low pay and no chance?

Selling Offers Biggest Opportunities

Opportunities in Selling are simply astounding—$7,500—$10,000—$15,000 salaries are common. Newspapers carry hundreds of ads daily for trained men. Even the untrained—the guess-work Salesman makes big money. But it's the trained Salesman—who has learned **EXACTLY** how, who is "cashing in" biggest.

$4,000 to $15,000 A YEAR

Decide now to get one of these "Big Jobs." Get into Selling—the "Big Money" line. Throw off the hand-cuffs of low pay.

I Will Train You Quickly in Your Spare Time

Give yourself a real chance. Give my training a chance. It will give you your big chance. Determine now to find out the marvelous things that the Ward Spare-Time Course in Modern Master-Selling will do for you.

Don't Think You Can't Sell—I'll Show You How

You need not have had a minute's selling experience. Thru my long experience as General Sales Manager and Trainer of Salesmen, I know and give you exactly the training you need. My Spare-Time Course in Master Salesmanship is the most complete, practical and useable course ever written. It shows you not only **WHAT** and **HOW** to do—but also **WHY.** It is the one training that will make you a money-making salesman, able to make $4,000 to $15,000 a year.

You Don't Need High School or College Education

You can read easy, every-day words—that's enough. Lack of education is no drawback. Some of the world's greatest salesmen didn't even finish grammar school. So regardless of your age, experience or education, I say to you—here's **YOUR LIFE'S OPPORTUNITY,** your chance to get into the class of Big Money-Makers, as a trained salesman.

I Guarantee Your Satisfaction

I am so sure, so positive, that you, too, can become easily and quickly a Big-Money-Maker in Selling, that I guarantee under bond, if upon completion of my course, you are not entirely satisfied you made the best investment of your life, I will promptly refund every cent of your money.

Clip Coupon Now for Free Book "THE RIGHT WAY TO SELL"

Your Key to Golden Opportunity is that coupon. I mean it absolutely. Today, you can take off the shackles that hold you to low pay. Mere dreaming of Big Money will never get it. Investigate. Send for **FREE sample lessons** and my book "The Right Way to Sell," also positive proof that you can be a real "Money Maker" in Selling—able to draw $4,000 to $15,000 a year. This costs you nothing and you are not obligating yourself in any way. Demand to see the facts, Today. Act—while your ambition is high—now.

JAS. P. WARD—General Sales Manager
MANUFACTURERS' SALES CORPORATION OF AMERICA
5225 Administration Building,
1760-1774 Montrose Avenue, Chicago, Illinois

The Ward Trained Salesman is the "Money Making" Salesman

TELEPATHY

Learn to transfer your thought—your WISH, your WILL, in a way to advance your business, to get friends, to collect debts, to win love, in short to make things come your way.

A Telepathic Expert has the World at His Feet

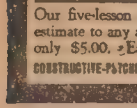
Our five-lesson course of instruction is valuable beyond estimate to any ambitious man or woman, and yet it costs only $5.00. Easily and quickly learned. Address—

CONSTRUCTIVE-PSYCHOLOGY LEAGUE, 4875 LAKE PARK AV., CHICAGO, ILL., U.S.A.

A WORD TO WOMEN!

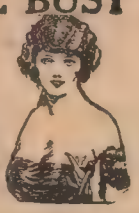
WHY SUFFER OR WORRY? Get quick relief. My proven successful PRIVATE "MONTHLY" remedy never fails. Safely relieves some of the longest, most obstinate, abnormal cases in 24 hours. No pain or interference with work. Guaranteed safe, Reliable and Best. Valuable directions with box. By mail $2. Extra Strength $3. **Book of Knowledge Free. VIOLA A. NURSE, Colorado Springs, Colo.**

Have Teeth Like Pearls



Yes—snow white—without a blemish! New toilet-goods **sensation. "IVORY-WHITE"** cleans and whitens teeth. Easily applied—absolutely harmless. **Not a tooth paste—but a liquid preparation having whitening—cleansing properties.** Send 50c, stamps or coin, for liberal bottle and full directions. The results will both surprise and delight you. Write today.
IVORY-WHITE CO., 7327 Harvard Ave., Dept. 505, Chicago

A BEAUTIFUL BUST AND COMPLEXION



FREE Send 10c NOW and I will show you how to have BOTH by a simple easy *harmless* method, in successful use more than 20 years. Will include FREE a 14 day three part treatment worth more than any $2. method known. No bathing, exercises, massage. No pumps or other dangerous appliances. No response, of course, unless dime is sent. Have dime back if *YOU say so.* Madame Williams, care of
M.T. Sanative Co., Buffalo, N.Y.

Try This on Your Hair 15 Days

Then let your mirror prove results. Write Today for FREE Trial Offer. Your hair need not thin out, nor need you become bald, for there is a way to destroy the microbe that destroys the hair. This different method will stop thinning out of the hair, lifeless hair, remove dandruff, itching, darken gray hair and threatened or increasing baldness, by strengthening and prolonging life of the hair for men and women. Send your name now before it is too late for the 15 days' free trial offer.
AYMES CO. 3932 N. Robey St. M-481 Chicago

BUNIONS

PEDODYNE "Solvent." New way. Pain immediately vanishes. Acts like magic on worst Bunions. Hump gradually disappears.

SENT ON TRIAL

To introduce we will gladly arrange to send you a Box of "Solvent" to try for your own Bunion. Thousands are sending. Simply write and say, "I want to try *PEDODYNE.*"
KAY LABORATORIES, Dept. K-892 186 No. La Salle St., Chicago, Illinois

FISH WILL BITE

INDIAN FISH LURE Guaranteed Fish Bait Asaurea fishing luck. 25c a bottle. Get the famous Automatic Hook Free recipe for making best Dough Bait known
SPORTSMEN SUPPLY CO. Dept. 35 Louisville, Ky.

Diabetes My book **"Eat and Get Well"** sent FREE to all sufferers of this dreaded disease. **No Dieting** or other drastic treatment.
M. Richartz, Dept. 704, 220 W. 42nd St., New York

YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIVE
in Los Angeles to make money there. Send for free booklet telling how. Biggest real estate activity in history. **J. F. WALTERS CO., Dept. 29 917 Consolidated Bldg., Los Angeles, Calif.**

"BEDROOM SECRETS"—For women. Sent sealed. 50c (coin). Spesecos, Box 986, Milwaukee, Wis.

A Boston man asked his colored janitor why he was opposed to matrimony.

"Ah ain't zactly erposed to it, sah," said the old fellow.

"Well, why is it you never married? Haven't you seen any one you liked?"

"Lawdy, yessah—but you see its dis way. Ah couldn't resk mah own judgment."

(Continued from page 177)

Spiritualist Church, and I consider him a Modernist and a Libertarian. With his efforts, I have come to the conclusion that he is fully correct, but, of course, a modern thinker may change his mind at any moment.

At one time, the writer was a rank materialist, believing that we arrive at the cradle and end completely at the grave; but my friend, Mr. Lomask, has converted me into believing that conscious life is continuous beyond the grave. I am still seeking the supreme ruling powers. Can you enlighten me? I wish to state that you have won a spot in my heart, and I feel as if I know you personally. H. H. C.

Answer

It was an interesting lecture that I had in Erie, and I was much pleased at the way Mr. Jacob Lomask handled the audience regarding his views.

There is but one supreme Creator. I believe He has no proxies to perform spiritualistic phenomena. Our destiny is in His hands, and we must be submissive to His mandates.

There is a vast difference between a spiritual existence and a spiritualistic existence.

There never has been any proof shown of a spirit having returned to this mundane sphere, that would stand the acid test of scrutiny of investigator or investigation. There are hundreds of books written that spirits had returned, but that is merely conscious or unconscious belief. The "Revue de France" published an article which it would pay you to read.

No. 16

Pasadena, Cal.

My dear Sir:

I have read with great interest your first instalment in WEIRD TALES of your exciting experiences with "The Spirit Fakers of Hermannstadt," and wish to say that your name and work have enlisted my vivid interest for some years.

Gleaning also from WEIRD TALES that you are an authority on psychic phenomena and spiritualistic conjectures concerning same, I herewith take advantage of the opportunity offered by WEIRD TALES to elicit from you, through its columns, or otherwise, an expert opinion as to what could have been the underlying causes of the peculiar psychic experiences which came spontaneously to me, utterly uncalled for.

I am, by nature, a born skeptic like yourself, and for the major portion of my life quite an atheist-materialist, yet,

(Continued on page 180)

A SALE

of Genuine Hand Beaded TUSSAH SILK Dresses

$3.98

BEAUTIFULLY HAND BEADED

Yes, we mean it, the price is only $3.98! Undoubtedly the biggest bargain sensation in years! A bewitchingly beautiful new style genuine Tussah Silk Dress, richly beaded and elegantly finished in every way. Most amazing offer ever made—don't miss it! Be quick! They will go fast!

Send No Money!

Richly made of fine quality genuine Tussah Silk, soft and shimmering—an ideal material. A striking feature is the elaborate beading—pretty bugle beads in rich color tones set in a most tasteful and elegant design. Self material narrow sash. Fashionable kimono length sleeves with slashed cuffs. Round neck; tailoring throughout is perfect, you will be delighted with the workmanship. The style is one-piece, becoming to all ages and figures.

HURRY! your order—no money now. Pay only on arrival special sale price $3.98 and postage. If after try-on you don't think it the biggest bargain of your life, your money back.

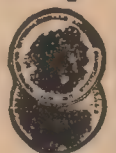
COLORS—Navy Blue, Tan, Natural, Brown or Black. SIZES—Women's 32 to 46 bust: Misses' 14 to 22 years.

A Style Fresh From Paris

Money Back Guaranteed

INTERNATIONAL MAIL ORDER CO.
Dept. D-5026 Chicago

Stop Using a Truss



STUART'S PLAPAO-PADS are different from the truss, being mechanico-chemico applicators made self-adhesive purposely to hold the distended muscles securely in place. No straps, buckles or spring attached—cannot slip, so cannot chafe or press against the pubic bone. Thousands have successfully treated themselves at home without hindrance from work—most obstinate cases conquered. Soft as velvet—easy to apply—inexpensive. Awarded Gold Medal and Grand Prix. Process of recovery is natural, so afterwards no further use for trusses. We prove it by sending Trial of Plapao absolutely **FREE** Write name on Coupon and send TODAY.

Reduced Fac-Simile Gold Medal

Reduced Fac-Simile Grand Prix

Plapao Co., 837 Stuart Bldg., St. Louis Mo.

Name .....
Address .....
Return mail will bring Free Trial Plapao

BE A MAN

Brace up, enjoy life's pleasures. For those who suffer from loss of vigor, glandular deficiency, nerve weakness and premature age we highly recommend PEP-TABS. Enclose $2.00 or sent C. O. D. Quick results. Write today in confidence for FREE pamphlet and testimonials.
HAMILTON LABORATORIES
Dept. 22, American Bank Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.
PEP-TABS mailed under plain wrappers.

NERVATONE

Relieve those nerve racking attacks. Simple Home Treatment used by thousands sent FREE. No matter what you've tried, send for it Today.
NERVATONE, Dept. 140 Town & Pearl Sts., Columbus, O.

CATARRH

TREATED FREE 10 DAYS to prove quick relief. Dr. Coffee had catarrh, deafness, head noises. He found a treatment that gave complete relief. Thousands used it successfully. Want you to try it free. Write
Dr. W. O. COFFEE
Dept. 3080 Davenport, Iowa

Tobacco Habit BANISHED
Let Us Help You

No craving for tobacco in any form after you begin taking Tobacco Redeemer. Don't try to quit the tobacco habit unaided. It's often a losing fight against heavy odds and may mean a serious shock to the nervous system. Let us help the tobacco habit to quit YOU. It will quit you, if you will just take Tobacco Redeemer according to directions. It is marvelously quick; thoroughly reliable.

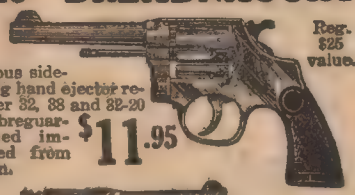
Not a Substitute

Tobacco Redeemer contains no habit-forming drugs of any kind. It is in no sense a substitute for tobacco. After finishing the treatment you have absolutely no desire to use tobacco again or to continue the use of the remedy. It makes not a particle of difference how long you have been using tobacco, how much you use or in what form you use it—whether you smoke cigars, cigarettes, pipe, chew plug or fine cut or use snuff, Tobacco Redeemer will positively remove all craving for tobacco in any form in a very few days. This we absolutely guarantee in every case or money refunded.

Write today for our free booklet showing the deadly effect of tobacco upon the human system and positive proof that Tobacco Redeemer will quickly free you of the habit.

Newell Pharmacal Company,
Dept. 743 St. Louis, Mo.

The DREADNAUGHT



famous side-swing hand ejector revolver 32, 38 and 32-20 calibre guaranteed imported from Spain. Reg. $25 value. **$11.95**

The Super Dreadnaught Imported from Spain. Made of fine tool steel 32, 38 and 32-20 calibre Reg. $35 value. **$14.50**

World famous German Luger, 30 cal. $15.45. Imported Top Break Revolver, automatic ejecting 32, or 38 cal. $7.85. Genuine Mauser, 9 shots automatic 25 cal. $11.80, 32 cal. $12.50. All brand new and absolutely perfect. Guaranteed imported. Use Standard Cartridges. Pay on arrival plus few cents postage. Satisfaction or money refunded. **SEND NO MONEY**

UNITED SALES CO., 16 E. 22nd Street Dept. 181 New York

BIRTH-CONTROL

The Limitation of Offspring

Why pay the price! Spare yourself untold misery. Don't marry until you have read our wonderful book by a foremost Birth Control Physician. Tells simply and clearly all you should know about BIRTH CONTROL. Marriage, etc. Discusses the following subjects: Too Many Children; Birth Control Methods; Prevention or Conception; Private Advice to Women; Science of Eugenics. Over 200 pages, cloth bound. ALSO, for a limited time only, "What Every Mother Should Know" by Margaret Sanger, great Birth Control Advocate. SEND NO MONEY. When the TWO books arrive, pay postman only $2.50 plus postage.

DEFIANCE PUB. CO., 110 W. 40th St., Dept. 617 N.Y.C.

FITS See sworn statements of cases free of Epileptic Fits many years. Sample medicine free on request. F. H. Roof Ch. Co., C. H. Sta. 573, Dp. 60, New York

(Continued from page 179)

curiously enough, with a strong leaning toward occultism and a most intense desire for truth in every department of human activity, but particularly as to the claims of our religion and spiritualism, in which, by ardent study, I have discovered a great affinity as to the claims in each of its psychic phenomena, formerly termed "miracles."

I have also, like yourself, acquired quite an extensive psychic and spiritualistic library, embracing the fine work of some of the greatest scientists, such as Sir Alfred Russel Wallace, Cesare Lombroso, Sir William Crookes, Dr. Baron von Schrenck-Notzing. ("Materializations Phaenomene,") which I read in the original German edition and parts of which I translated into English for my good friend, Dr. Lucien Larkin, astronomer at Mt. Lowe Observatory here, who was interested to know of the chemical constituents of the "ectoplasm" or "teleplasm" which issues from the bodies of some mediums, such as Marie Berand, Miss Goligher, Eva C., Francis Klusky, etc., and which was observed and photographed by Dr. Geley of Paris, Dr. Crawford of Belfast, Ireland, Dr. Schrenck-Notzing of Munich, etc., etc.; (this substance, as you undoubtedly know, being the "plasm" utilized by the Invisible Spirit or Intelligence to build therefrom a temporary body such as was worn on earth and for the purpose of identification).

Having such books as Dr. William G. Crawford's "The Reality of Psychic Phenomena" and "The Psychic Structures of the Goligher Circle," von Schrenck-Notzing's big volume with 152 large-plate photo flashlight reproductions of his "Materializations Phaenomene," and many other similar works, you undoubtedly are familiar with the modus operandi of a strict scientific nature to register the progress of the extraordinary phenomena.

I have just finished reading Camille Flammarion's three books, the "Trilogy on Death," No. 3 on "After Death" especially enlisting my attention.

As Mr. Flammarion details hundreds of such extraordinary events (evidently well-authenticated), claiming to have in his possession something like 7,000 or 9,000 personal letters from all over the world and covering a wide range of phenomena, I am curious to learn from you, how all such phenomena could be duplicated by trick-simulation or by the processes of legerdemain.

I have been following with great interest the "Scientific American's" "test-procedures" under J. Malcolm Bird's chairmanship and under your and others' collaboration, to land into the net of proof and fact under severe "test conditions" the various claims of professional mediumship, and, if I can judge at least approximately correctly, it seems to me they have already encountered some genuine phenomena.

But kindly permit me to ask a specially important question. If all phenomena of that sort were, or could eventually be proved to be, individual or collective hallucination or subconscious mind action, both collective and individual, or based upon other purely earth-born terrestrial and material conditions, how could so many so-called "miracles" have been attributed to "Jesus the Christ," and other biblical supernormal phenomena?

Personally, I regard all such genuine phenomena as spiritistic or spiritualistic in origin, and am quite well posted on the Talmudic Expurgations history of Jesus, and other non-biblical information of an historical character, concerning the "Psychic Medium," as I call him.

I think the Bible will eventually stand or fall altogether as an individual receptacle for faith and hope in an individual, self-conscious future life after death, by just how much, or how far, science can or will eventually be able to prove whether any phenomena whatsoever is or can be due to discarnate intelligence or spirits.

But I am overstepping the rights of communication and will merely say in conclusion that I wish you would consider the mental-telepathy experiment in my clipping, the "Laura, to those coming to be revealed," clairaudient sentence and its sequel, the "prayer for rain" incident, and the terrifying three enormous blows on the bedroom closet door after reading and commenting aloud on "The Revelations of St. John," as these were among the most startling of my California experiences.

However, in Pittsburgh, Pa., my birth and home town, I had quite a number of other experiences equally, if not more, startling, including apparitions of my

(Continued on page 182)

DO YOU KNOW THE TRUTH?

Do you know your opportunities in life, your prospects for happiness, marriage, friends, enemies, your future success in this world? Do you know under which Zodiac Sign you were born? Were you born under a lucky star?

FREE I will tell you, free, the wonderful interesting astrological interpretations of the Zodiac Sign under which you were born, if you will let me know the exact date of your birth, in your own hand. To cover the cost of this announcement and postage, enclose 10c (in any form), your name and address plainly written. My interpretation will be written in plain English and sent to you personally, carefully sealed and postpaid. It will be a really great SURPRISE to you. Write today.

Bardi Shiraz Studio, 799 Broadway, Suite 623, Dept. 121, New York City

Tighten Your Grip on a Trade

Be An Electrical Expert

At $75 to $200 a Week

Every up-to-date fellow knows what a future there is in electricity.

Big pay—fascinating work on land or sea—rapid advancement in a field where jobs are ten times more numerous than trained men to fill them, where $75.00 a week is just a fair starter, where top notchers pull down ten thousand dollars or more a year—in a field, where any man if he wishes, can easily have a business of his own, have men working for him, **be his own boss!**

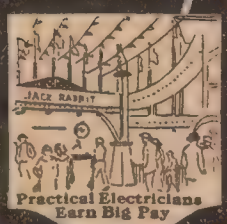
But what the average young man does NOT know, is what a simple, easy, A-B-C sort of a job it is to **get started.**

You Can Start Right Now!

Yes, **you.** You don't need a thing you don't already have! You can read. You can write. You can figure. You can **think.** And in your breast is the fire of ambition—the desire to get ahead! All right, that's all you need—we can help you just as you are—just as we have helped scores, yes, thousands of other two-fisted young fellows determined to get out of the rut and into the electric field—into work that will be pleasant—easy—and all in your home, during spare time.

Fascinating Home Study As You Hold Your Old Job

With the help we will give you, you can slip right into one of these big pay—he-man jobs and never lose a day's work. After a few weeks' start, you can earn enough in installation and electric repair jobs alone to more than pay for the Course and lay a foundation for an Electrical Contracting or Repair Shop Business of your own. When the proper time comes, we will tell you the easy way to go about doing it.



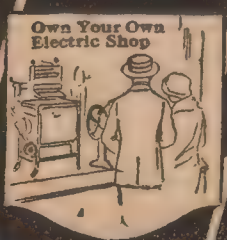
The Most Practical, Thorough and Condensed Electrical Course Ever Written

This is the only home study electrical course that gives you the combined practical and theoretical training you must have before you can be a successful electrician without which you cannot succeed—with which you cannot fail.

Written not by ONE man, with the narrow one-man viewpoint, but by 22 of the brainiest, most successful, electrical experts ever drawn from the field of practice and theory. Gives you the complete mastery of the subject—qualifies you as electrical expert to boss jobs—fits you right into the kind of a job you want—and does it in shortest time—at lowest cost—with the

Most Binding Guarantee of Results Ever Offered!

Satisfaction guaranteed or **no sale!** We not only SAY we can make you an electrical expert, we Guarantee it! If you are not absolutely satisfied when you have finished our Practical Electrical Course, we will refund every nickel you sent us.



FREE! **Experimental Outfit Worth $30**
Drafting Course Worth Another $30
Big Electrical Library Worth $25

Find out all about our offer. Find out about the thousands who have taken this course in preference to all others and MADE GOOD. Find out about the Electric Library—four elegant volumes—worth $25, but **free.** About the free Drafting Course worth another $30. The free Experimental and Demonstration Outfit, including a real, not a make-shift Electric Motor, Wheatstone Bridge, etc.—the most scientific, high-grade and complete Experimental Outfit ever supplied with a Course in Electricity. Get all the facts without obligation, without expense! Just send the coupon!

American School

Dept. EA127 **Drexel Ave. and 58th Street, Chicago**

FREE Electrical Coupon

American School,
Dept. EA127, Chicago
Please rush all information relative to your Course in Electricity. This obligates me in no way whatever.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

This Beautiful Hawaiian **UKULELE FREE!**

Yes, absolutely free, a beautiful genuine Koa-wood finish Hawaiian ukulele, full size—given free with our new amazingly easy copyrighted Short Cut Ukulele Course. Our ukulele makes rich harmonious music to accompany impromptu singing—provides wonderful fun and entertainment anywhere any time. Finest workmanship, sweet singing tone.

CLIP THIS AD.

Learn to Play in 1 Hour!

Think of it! You can learn to play the ukulele in one short hour by our amazing new method. Yes—only ONE hour. No weeks of drudgery. No months of hard practice. By our new copyrighted method you can be playing the sweet sounding Hawaiian Ukulele in one hour. You can accompany popular songs or amusing ditties. In a short time you can become an expert player of the ukulele. Send no money. Mail just this coupon today.

Send No Money

Don't send us a penny. Simply fill out the coupon below and mail it at once. We will send you our marvelous Short Cut Course with Free Hawaiian Ukulele outfit by parcel post. On arrival deposit with postman only $2.98 plus a few pennies postage. You don't risk a cent! Satisfaction guaranteed or money refunded. Fill out coupon NOW and mail today!

Ferry & Co., 630 Jackson Blvd., Dept. 9935, Chicago, Ill.

Please send me your complete copyrighted short cut ukulele course including full size Free ukulele outfit. On arrival I will deposit $2.98, plus postage, with postman. If I am not satisfied you will refund my money.

Name .....

Address ..... City ..... State .....

AGENTS Big Winner Just Out **$90.00 a week**

New Invention, Marvelous Quickedge Sharpener—a perfect, low priced Knife and Shear sharpener. Patented. Abolishes dull knives and shears forever from every home. Needed every day. Mechanical wonder. Works like magic. So simple a child can use it. Draws fine, keen, accurate edge on any kitchen knife, carving knife, paring knife, skinning knife, sticker, bread knife, or shears and scissors in **10 seconds.** Just put knife in slot—turn crank—sharpens both sides at once—automatically. Always ready. Housewives demand it on sight. Will last for years. Absolutely guaranteed. The biggest, fastest seller invented in ten years. A necessity.

We Want Hustlers—Make $15 a Day

An immediate cash opportunity for men and women, **who want to work fast and make money fast.** Ten second demonstration gets orders at every home. No talking necessary. No competition. Sells at every house—in town, city or country. Every woman wants one—Exclaims, "Just what I've always wanted." Sold on absolutely money back guarantee.

No Experience Necessary

Profits start first day. Business furnishes capital. Gilbert, W. Va., sold 36 in eight hours. W. S. Swift, Montana, sold 9 in two hours. Herndon took 7 orders first hour. Soper, Wis., made $55 in two afternoons. Lewis of Kans., says, "I sold 100 sharpeners in four days." Kain, Ky., sold nine after supper. Hall, N. J. writes, "I think it's great. Sold six in half hour." Kerr, Md., says, "Women can hardly wait for them. You can make this money."

200% Profit—Start Now

Leave 50 on trial—pick up 50 orders at 200% Cash profit. Get busy at once. We take all the risk. No charge for territory. Your time is your own. No boss. High class, clean, money-making, unlimited opportunity. **Send No Money**—just write for complete particulars **FREE.** We'll hold your county for you. This means $15 a day up to $7500 a year to agent who gets your county. You can have it **FREE.** Send your name and address. Give name of your county. Act at once. Address—

Quickedge Sharpener Co.
426 Sharpener Building
Jackson, Michigan

(4)

Only **$2** Selling Price

Sharpens Any Kitchen Knife, Carving Knife or Shears in 10 Seconds

What is Going to Happen to You?

Do you fear what the future has in store for you? Are you constantly worried that something dreadful is going to happen? Stop worrying. Learn what the stars predict. The ancient science of astrology reveals all.

VIRGO WILL TELL YOU FREE

Simply send in your name and address and I will interpret the Zodiac sign you were born under. Be sure to state the exact date of your birth in your own handwriting. Enclose 10c to cover cost of mailing and postage. Your astrological reading will be sent you written in plain language, mailed sealed, postpaid. You will be overjoyed with the good news. Don't wait, send birth date and 10c NOW. VIRGO STUDIO, 38 Howard Street, New York City DEPT. 527

ALL WOMEN When delayed, or to prevent Delay, read our MEDICAL book, 430 pages. Treat your trouble properly. **Absolutely,** nothing else **Reliable.** Don't be Duped, Deceived and Swindled. Book and instructions $1.00. Interesting booklet, "BIRTH CONTROL," 6 cents in stamps. CONVINCING ADVICE FREE. **DR. FOUTS SPECIALTY CO., D-7, Terre Haute, Ind.**

FREE TO MEN Particulars of a New Scientific Drugless Method that Renews Physical Vigor, radically different from any other, of Vital Importance to every man. Write Now. Enclose Stamp for Postage.
ACME SALES CO., DEPT. 25, EMPIRE BLDG., DENVER, COLO.

(Continued from page 180)

dead father (two of them), and just at a time when I was most unbelieving, atheistic and leaning altogether to materialistic opinions of being.

How my own mind, whether consciously or subconsciously, could produce any of these results, especially when rebellious against all credulity in such matters, I am utterly unable to say or determine. But what I can affirm positively and as fact only is that these things occurred exactly as detailed without an atom of embellishment or exaggeration.

I shall await your response with eager interest and am looking forward expectantly to your next installment of the "Spirit Fakers of Hermannstadt" experiences in WEIRD TALES. L. O.

Answer

I have had a similar experience of rain miracle, by command, etc. In my case it was a mere coincidence, and doubtless it was the same in your case.

All the scientists you name have been deceived by noted mediums, and there is full proof recorded of such being a fact. The whole subject of occultism is frail.

THE CELLAR

(Continued from page 151)

or for hours—in the dark there is no time! Alice was the first to speak.

"Peter," she said. "I'm terribly thirsty; my lips are dry and parched and my tongue feels swollen."

Silently I kissed her, and she whispered:

"You too, Peter? Oh, my dear, forgive me for complaining. Forgive me! Are you going to work any more today?"

"Yes, if you like," and I started to rise, but she held me.

"No, it's no use. You couldn't make it. Darling, will you forgive me for getting you into this?"

"Getting me into it? What do you mean? You didn't get us into it, any more than I did—Tom was too clever for us, that's all."

"No, Peter, I mean in the first place. For making you love me—I shouldn't have let you—when I was married."

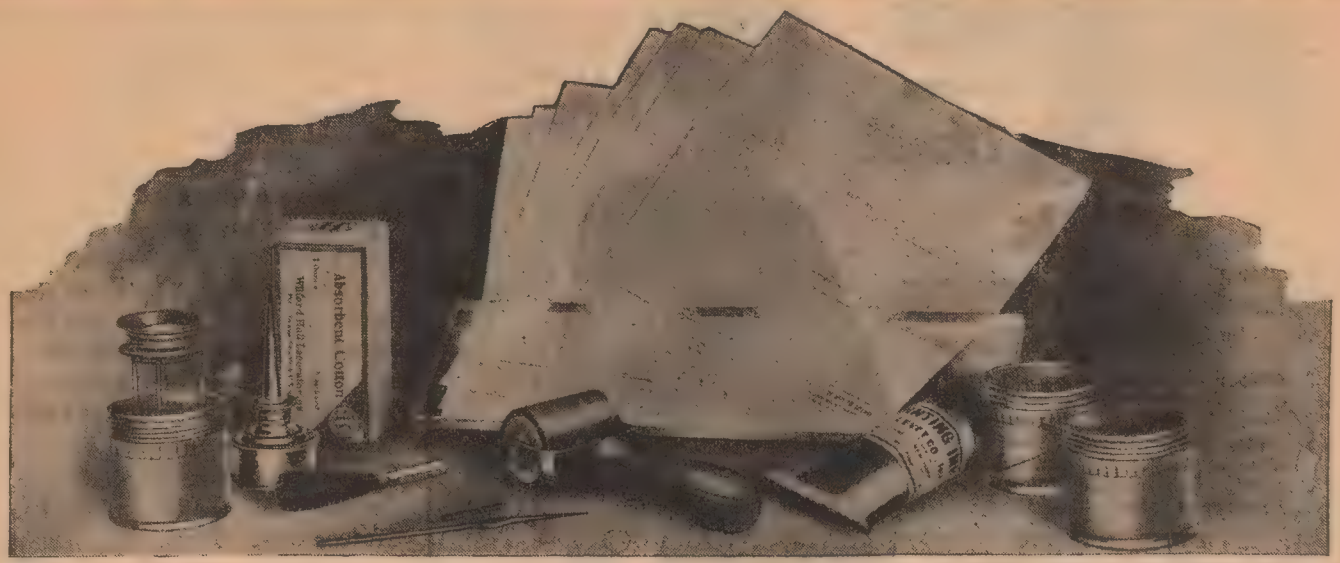
I clasped her tight.

"Sweetheart, no man could help loving you! You're not to blame—no one's to blame. The fault is mine—I should have gone away."

She crept closer, put her head on my shoulder, and sobbed.

So utter black despair took us, so we gave over all hope, and lay quiet. Hour after eternal hour dragged its slow length along—unmarked—uncounted—day or night, we could not know. We lay there, the leaden dark and the silence weighing on us, pressing us down, loading our souls—from time to time Alice or I stirred slightly, shifting to an easier position, but that was all. Time passed, cramped and cold we lay, speaking at times, but for the most part suffering, each striving to spare the other,

(Continued on page 184)



FREE!
Finger Print Outfit

I am making this wonderful offer to those who enroll right now to learn this fascinating, big-paying profession. Just think, I will give you a fine professional Finger Print Outfit absolutely FREE of charge. The outfit is exactly like the one I use myself. It is just what you will use when you are a Finger Print Expert. Hurry! Take advantage of this special offer before it is withdrawn.

Work on Real Cases!

Every month I'll send you "the dope" on a lot of wanted men for whom rewards are posted. I'll give you their photographs, finger prints, Bertillon descriptions and Reward Offers. You build up your own bureau of wanted criminals. It's practical work. It's great.

Learn at Home! 30 Minutes a Day

Study this interesting work at home in your spare moments. Half an hour a day will be enough. In a few months, you will be an expert capable of handling a high salaried position. My course will give you just the training you need. Share in the many big rewards this profession offers you. Start now to take advantage of this opportunity.

Big Salaries— Rich Rewards

The nation wide demand for finger print experts is increasing every day. The successful, highly paid Secret Service men and Detectives are the ones who are trained in the Finger Print profession. If you can read or write English, you can acquire this training in a few months. You need no previous experience and some of our most successful graduates have had only a common school education.

Write
and find out about this offer!

Send for complete information about this unusual opportunity. Besides the free outfit I will give you absolutely Free, a Course in Secret Service Intelligence, so you will be thoroughly equipped to handle any branch of the work. There are big-paying, interesting jobs waiting for the trained Finger Print Expert. The sooner you start, the bigger your chance for reward. Fill out the coupon right away. Send it TODAY.

U. S. SCHOOL OF FINGER PRINTS
Dept. 13-95 7003 No. Clark St., Chicago, Ill.

U. S. SCHOOL OF FINGER PRINTS,
Dept. 13-95, 7003 No. Clark St., Chicago, Ill.

Without any obligation whatsoever, please send me full information about your Free Finger Print Outfit. Also tell me how I can become a Finger Print Expert.

Name_____ Age_____

Address _____

City_____ State_____

Send Only $1.00 Now!

No C. O. D. to Pay

Silk Charmeuse

Latest Style Dress

Only $1.00 with the coupon now! Just the dress you want — New York style—fine quality material —and a bargain price! Best of all it is sent to you on approval. Try it on! See how becoming it is! How fashionable!

Pleated Style

Made of excellent quality silk charmeuse —will wear wonderfully. Belt of twisted self material at the waist with an attractive fancy ornament at one side. Beginning at the belt, on both sides, extends a stylish panel of self material neatly pleated—the sleeves also have cuffs pleated to match. Suitable for ladies of all ages. Comes in 2 colors, black or brown. Sizes 34-44—Misses' 16-20. **Order by No. S-39. Terms: $1.00 with coupon, $3.20 a month. Price, $19.95.**

6 Months to Pay!

Think! You can buy on our easy payment plan and save money besides! Be fashionable—well dressed—at prices below cash prices in retail stores—Only $1.00 with the coupon brings you this handsome silk charmeuse dress—Then if you are delighted with it pay only $3.20 a month. Don't be without a new dress with this sensational opportunity right before you.

Elmer Richards Co.

Dept. 3935 West 35th Street, Chicago

I enclose **$1.** Please open a charge account for me. Kindly send me the Silk Charmeuse Dress No. S-39. If I am not delighted, I can return it and get my $1 back. Otherwise I will pay **$3.20** a month until I have paid **$19.95** in all.

Color ☐ Black ☐ Brown Bust.....Belt.....Hip.....Length.....
(Be sure to fill out the above line.)

Name.....

Address.....

P. O...... *State*.....

Send for FREE Style Book

You Should Know the Truth!

I will tell FREE

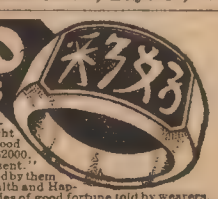
What are your chances in life, your future prospects, happiness in marriage, friends, enemies, success—under which zodiac sign were you born? ASTROLOGY the most ancient science of history indicates all.

SOLAR will tell you FREE whether you were born under a lucky star and will give you the most accurate astrological interpretation of your zodiac sign. Send **immediately** your name and birth date in YOUR OWN HANDWRITING, and to cover the cost of this notice and postage ENCLOSE 12 CENTS, (stamps or coin) also exact name and address. There will then be sent you securely sealed and postpaid your astrological interpretation, plainly written and understood. **A great surprise awaits you!** Do not fail to send birth date and 12 cents. Print name and address to avoid delay. WRITE TO-DAY—DON'T DELAY.

SOLAR STUDIO, 489 Fifth Avenue, Dept. 253, NEW YORK

Authors! Manuscripts Typed, Stories, Novels, Photoplays, Poems, etc., neatly and promptly done at a reasonable rate. G. S. MERRYMAN, Bayboro, N. C.

$2000 IN 48 HOURS



FANNY BRICE, "Ziegfeld Follies" Star, wrote: "Forty-eight hours after I put on my Chinese Good Luck Ring I received a check for $2000. It was an entirely unexpected present." This Mystic Chinese Symbol, reputed by them to bring Luck in Love, Riches, Health and Happiness to the wearer. Amazing stories of good fortune told by wearers. Talk of the hour. Genuine Silver finish, $1.55 C. O. D., 2 for $2.50. Genuine 14 Karat Gold Pl. $2.50 C. O. D., 2 for $4.50. Send strip of paper size of finger. State if man, woman, boy or girl. *Send today.*
Ching Ling Foo, Desk 116, No. 536 S. Clark St., Chicago

(Continued from page 182)

till after long hours—days, perhaps—of torture, Alice spoke, her voice thick and blurred, no more than a whisper.

"Peter?"

"Yes?" and my own voice sounded strange and far-off in my ears.

"Dear, I don't believe I'll be conscious much longer—will you kiss me once more before I go—my love?"

Silently I bent and kissed her, and she clung to me, her arms about my neck, and I kissed her again and again, and stroked her hair.

"Sweetheart," she whispered, "do something for me? Don't turn the light on again. People who die—of thirst—aren't pleasant—to look at—they say. And I'd—like—you—to remember me—as—I used—to be. Promise—Honey?"

For answer I lifted the lamp and broke the glass against the floor. She heard the crackle and understood. I felt her arms tighten about my neck—such a weak little clasp!—and she whispered:

"Thank—you—Dear!"

And once more the dark and the silence settled over us, and once more the Horror closed down.

PRESENTLY she grew delirious, and I was sick to the very depths of my soul—her raving, struggles, shrieks, blasphemies—worse than all, her mad croaking laughter—at last she was too weak to struggle, and lay quiet.

Side by side we lay, and the endless round of the dragging hours rolled over us as we waited the inevitable end. Alice was helpless, and I in little better case. Weak with hunger, tortured by the agonies of thirst, I felt my dry tongue, rough and harsh, swelling in my mouth, pressing against my teeth, forcing my mouth open. Alice began to moan softly. I clasped her hand, and the answering pressure told me that she was still conscious—could still suffer. Once more I cursed the fiend who so tortured her—I was growing light-headed—I saw visions of brooks, of lakes, of green and grassy meadows—water, water! And ever that low moaning at my side!

I thought of rain—I heard it pattering on the roof—no; delirium!—of the storm through which we had driven—my mind reeled to the pump I had seen in the kitchen above us—water, water! And ever that horrible moan brought me back to our prison—our tomb!

I laid my hand on Alice's head, and felt it rocking from side to side—I passed my hand gently, caressingly, over her face—and shuddered—the cracked lips were drawn back from the teeth and I touched the harsh, swollen tongue protruding from her mouth! I clasped her hand, but no answering pressure came. Her moaning had died to a faint whimper, heartrending in its utter helplessness. Whimper—whimper—whimper! It beat on my brain like the roar of the surf on rocky shores—it grew and swelled and reverberated in my ears—I tried to scream,

(Continued on page 186)

Nuga-Tone FREE

20-DAYS' TRIAL TREATMENT

Nuga-Tone Is a Doctor's Special Prescription, So Useful in Building Rich, Red Blood, and Stronger Men and Women

SEND NO MONEY

Just sign and mail the Coupon bel RIGHT NOW! **That's all you have to do to a 20-Days' Free Trial Treatment of the Great Blood and Strength Medicine—Nuga-Tone.** It invigorates, tones and stimulates the Bodily Functions and helps them do their work as Nature intended they should. **This is one of the safest and sanest ways to get quick and satisfactory results.**

Nuga-Tone contains a special form of **Iron** to make red, healthful blood. It is **Iron** that puts color in the cheeks and gives tone to the muscles. Nuga-Tone also contains a medicinal form of **Phosphorous.** It is **Phosphorous** that plays an important role in the body. In addition, Nuga-Tone contains **SIX** other valuable medicines. These splendid ingredients are used the world over by many of the best doctors to assist Nature in building up and strengthening a weakened, run-down body.

Nuga-Tone possesses genuine merit and must prove its value in your own case, or it will not cost you a penny. Nuga-Tone is a doctor's famous prescription that has been prescribed and used with excellent results for the past **thirty-five years.** Thousands of men and women are loud in their praise of Nuga-Tone because it has given them better health, increased strength, renewed energy, greater endurance.

Nuga-Tone improves the blood-circulation and stimulates bodily functions. It invigorates and regulates the bowels so they move more regular, thereby overcoming constipation. Nuga-Tone strengthens and tones the stomach, improves the appetite and aids digestion. It helps to prevent and overcome bloating and gas in the stomach or bowels. Nuga-Tone tends to induce sound, refreshing sleep and increase weight in thin, run-down, "worn-out," anemic people. Nuga-Tone sweetens the breath and removes the coating from the tongue, when due to constipation or indigestion. It relieves bad headaches, and a sallow, "muddy" skin will become clear and rosy. Nuga-Tone gives you more pep and greater ambition. It is one of the best medicines for weak, worn, run-down, ailing, sickly men and women. Take Nuga-Tone for a few days and note the change—**you will be more cheerful, happier and feel that life is worth living.**

Nuga-Tone is a good, honest, reliable medicine. Thousands of men and women now look to it in time of need. Hundreds of people have written us, telling of the highly gratifying results following its use. Read what some of them say, then **send for your free 20-day trial treatment at once.**

Remember, Nuga-Tone must help you. It must give you **relief.** It must **convince** you that **it is just the very preparation your system needs.**

The test is free. We take all the chances, run all the risks. Your judgment in the matter is final. **Don't let another day pass until you have sent us the Coupon for your free trial treatment.**

AD. No. EH—465 LI.

ACT TO-DAY!

I can recommend Nuga-Tone as a good medicine. I was all run-down, I had indigestion, was nervous and could not sleep good at night—would be awake for hours. I sleep good now and have a good appetite. I am 57 years old and feel as well as I did when I was a younger man. I took 6 bottles of Nuga-Tone. It built me up and made me feel like a man.—Geo. W. Male, Berryburg, W. Va.

Before taking Nuga-Tone I was weak and had no appetite, was constipated all the time and had dizzy and nervous spells. I couldn't sleep and gas would form on my stomach. I was in terrible shape. I saw your ad and thought I would try a bottle, so I did, and got great relief and sent for two more. I am in good health now. Nuga-Tone is a good medicine for the nerves, stomach and blood.—Mrs. John Richards, Jackson, Ohio.

Last spring I was all run-down and had a pain in my back. I saw your ad in a paper and decided to try a bottle. This did so much good that I tried another bottle of Nuga-Tone. I am improved so much that I feel like a new person. I am well now and gladly recommend Nuga-Tone to all who have a run-down system.—Geo. B. Levitt, Sublette, Kans.

Before taking Nuga-Tone I was nervous and all run-down and could hardly sleep. I saw your ad in the paper and ordered one bottle of Nuga-Tone and now I do my work as good as I ever did.—Geo. B. Parrish, Butledge, Mo.

I can honestly say your medicine has done wonders for me. I had been troubled with stomach trouble for years, but am entirely rid of it after taking a few bottles of Nuga-Tone. You may use my letter if it will help advertise your medicine, for it should help others as it has helped me.—Julius Hanneman, Reed City, Mich.

I took several bottles of Nuga-Tone and was greatly benefited. My nerves, stomach and other organs have improved very much. — Dudley O. Bryan, Dink, W. Va.

I wish to say that Nuga-Tone did more for me than all the doctors have done for me and I have tried many. I was all run-down, weak and nervous, was not able to do anything. I am now stronger and feel better than I have for 10 years. I can say to all weak, nervous, run-down people to use Nuga-Tone. It built me up and I think it will do the same for you. I can say it is truly a good medicine.—Anna L. Hogg, Korea, Ky.

I can't begin to tell the great good Nuga-Tone has done me and am glad to recommend it to others. It has saved me many a doctor bill. I feel stronger now than I have for the past year. I have told some of my friends about it and have Nuga-Tone in my house all the time, as I don't want to be without it. My nerves were all run down and I couldn't sleep at night; now I can sleep all night fine.—Tom Webb, S. Pittsburg, Tenn.

I have received Nuga-Tone and I think it's great. Ever since I have been using it I have not suffered with any trouble. I will honestly recommend Nuga-Tone to any one that reads this letter.—Louis Thomas, Utica, N. Y.

I took three bottles of Nuga-Tone and it is doing me more good than any of the medicine I ever took. I feel stronger, my nerves and heart are much better and I can sleep better at night. —Mrs. Peter Arc, Langdondale, Pa.

Thank you for results I received through Nuga-Tone. I was all run down and my stomach was all upset and in the morning when I got up I felt more tired than I was in the evening. I weighed 130 pounds; now I weigh 155 pounds and feel like myself again.—Gottfried Schilling, Prescott, Wis.

I am going to say to you that I think your Nuga-Tone is all you claim for it and more. It has helped my stomach very much and it has also helped my nerves very much and I can sleep good at night. You can use this in any way you see fit and I hope this will be a help to someone else. —Wm. M. Bretlinger, Jeffersontown, Ky.

Nuga-Tone has made a new man out of me. Before taking Nuga-Tone, after working all day I could hardly walk home. My legs would get weak and my bones would ache and I was awfully thin. I was restless after going to bed. Since I took Nuga-Tone I feel young again. I work all day, good and hard, and feel good after my day's work is done. In fact, there is nothing the matter with me now.—August Mitchell, McMillan, Mich.

Nuga-Tone has helped me a great deal, for I was nervous and all run down and could not sleep, but since taking Nuga-Tone I am feeling all right and I am thankful that I tried Nuga-Tone. If anyone don't believe that Nuga-Tone will do all you claim it will, all they have to do is to try one bottle.—H. H. Mitchell, Swift Water, Miss.

ACT TODAY!

Fill in and mail the Coupon NOW. **Delays are sometimes costly.** Try this great energy-builder at our expense. **It has greatly improved the health of thousands of men and women—now let it prove its worth to you.** If Nuga-Tone wasn't such a good, dependable medicine we could not afford to let you try it 20 days absolutely free of cost. Use the Coupon right away—before you forget. **Nuga-Tone is also sold by druggists with the understanding and agreement that it must give you entire satisfaction or money refunded. See agreement on each package.**

30 Days' Trial Coupon

National Laboratory, Dept. H- 11, 1018 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago, Ill.

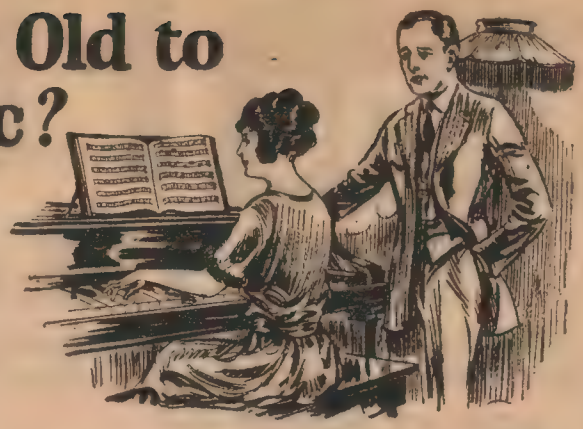
GENTLEMEN: Please send me FREE OF ALL COST, POSTAGE PREPAID, a 30 days' trial treatment of Nuga-Tone with the understanding I will take it 20 days, and if benefited pay you $1.00. If not benefited, I will return the remainder of the package and I owe you nothing.

Name.....

St. & No.

Or R. F. D.....

City.....State.....

Are You Too Old to Study Music?

Do you consider yourself past the age to take up music—that you can't afford to devote the time that it requires—that your mind can't concentrate on such things any longer? Then, you are exactly the person who will be interested in this astonishing, short-cut method for mastering any musical instrument.

OH, I'm sorry I didn't study music in my younger days. Now it's too late to commence—I have so many other things to think of."

How often do people make such remarks! The average adult considers himself too old to commence studying music, for, in the ordinary, old-fashioned way, months and months are consumed, and it is often years before you can render a selection with ease and credit. Monotonous exercises, heart-breaking scales, finger technique—all must be practiced over and over again, day in and day out. No wonder so many become discouraged and drop the study of music long before they have accomplished anything worth while!

Moreover, consider the enormous expense. You pay an instructor, who stays with you perhaps only one hour a week. Then, there are books to be bought—books that illustrate the music to be played, but which help in no other way. That means your progress depends entirely upon your teacher—you progress only as rapidly as *he* chooses to go.

New Method Amazes Music World

But all this needless hard work—all this apparent waste of time and money—is unnecessary. Through a wonderful new method originated by the U. S. School of Music, anybody, no matter how old or how young, can master any musical instrument within a remarkably short time.

Mr. E. Wolford, of Sharon Springs, New York, writes: "I am fifty years old, and learned to play the Hawaiian Guitar. I don't believe I ever would have learned to play if it weren't for your wonderful lessons."

Can you read and write? Then you can learn to play any instrument through this wonderful, short-cut, print-and-picture method as easily and quickly as Mr. Wolford did. Just as easily as you learn to combine letters into words, so do you learn to combine notes into beautiful melodies—that's how fascinating it is. And you read REAL music, too. There are no numbers or "tricks." You play from the same kind of notes that are used by our great musicians.

But, perhaps best of all, no private teacher is necessary—you don't need to tie yourself down to special hours or join a class. You can take a lesson as often as you wish, and can progress just as rapidly as you desire.

LEARN TO PLAY ANY INSTRUMENT	
Piano	Cello
Organ	Cornet
Violin	Harmony and Composition
Drums and Traps	Sight Singing
Banjo	Ukulele
Tenor Banjo	Guitar
Saxaphone	Hawaiian Steel Guitar
Mandolin	Piccolo
Clarinet	Harp
Flute	Trombone
Voice and Speech Culture	
Automatic Finger Control	

U. S. School of Music Largest in the World

Never before has such a sensation been created in the music world. This new method has revolutionized all the old, tiresome, long-drawn-out systems. Over 300,000 students have mastered music in their spare time in this delightfully easy way. They have found that not only is their progress far more rapid than under the old-fashioned system, but the expense, too, is remarkably small. Each lesson costs only a few cents—and the price includes the music, in every case.

FREE Book Explains New Method

Is there any particular instrument you are fond of—that you'd like to play? "Music Lessons in Your Own Home" tells you all about this successful new method in music. It tells of the wonderful success of thousands of delighted pupils. It tells the stories of old and young—how they mastered their favorite instrument—often in only ninety days. It proves from personal experience the reasons why the new, amazing method cannot fail. With it you also receive an actual illustration of the easy print-and-picture method used in this wonderful course.

Special Short-time Offer

The book also explains our special short-time offer to which you are entitled if you send off the coupon below. Mail the coupon TODAY. We expect so many thousands of requests to pour in that we cannot promise to hold the offer indefinitely. **U. S. School of Music, 405 Brunswick Building, New York.**

U. S. SCHOOL OF MUSIC,
405 Brunswick Bldg., New York City.

Please send me your free book, "Music Lessons in Your Own Home," with the folder illustrating your easy print-and-picture method, also full particulars of your special short-time offer. I am interested in the following course:

_____
(Name of Instrument or Course)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State_____

ARE YOU GROPING IN DARKNESS ??

Do You Know Under which zodiac sign you were born? What significance it has in shaping your life?

Are You Lucky? In Love, Marriage, Friends, Inheritance, Success

Send Birth Date I have made Astrology my life's work and offer the most interesting astrological interpretations of the Zodiac sign under which you were born.

I Will Tell You FREE

Send exact name, address and exact date of birth in own handwriting and receive your astrological interpretation in plain sealed envelope postpaid. A great surprise awaits you.

Please PRINT your name and do not fail to send your birthdate so as to avoid delay. Enclose 12 cents to cover cost of this notice and postage. Address me personally—DHASSI.

TARA STUDIO, 1133 Broadway, Desk 111-B, NEW YORK

(Continued from page 184)

but no sound came save only a faint moan—like that I had heard before!

Then there came to my mind something an old plainsman had once told me; that dying of thirst was not like dying of hunger; that when one passed from starvation there came a point beyond which recall was impossible, but when water lacked one could be brought back from the very edge of the grave, given but a trifle of moisture. Water! Could I but reach it, could I but find some—a few drops—Alice might yet live. Madness seized me at the thought, and again—for the hundredth time—I cursed Harkness in my soul. Once more I thought of the pump I had seen above us—two inches of wood and steel—a million miles away! Raging, furious, mad with anger and desperation, I staggered to my feet and in one last surge of strength crawled up the stairs. Delirium held me—I would beat again on the door—I threw myself against it—I beat on it with my fists—heedless of the pain—and even as I beat I knew the mad futility of the act—insane! Had I not tried it before, when stronger than now? Had not Harkness told us we were to die in the cellar? Could I now break down that deadly barrier? I beat once more, and strove to scream—the door held firm. I seized the handle and shook it—I turned the knob—the door swung back on well-oiled hinges—I staggered into a blaze of sunlight!

Have I said that Harkness was a sardonic fiend? Before leaving the house he had carefully, silently, drawn back the bolts and unbarred the door!

IN THE WEIRD LIGHT

(Continued from page 163)

golden glory? Can you hear the exquisite anthems of the innumerable white-robed choristers? If so, you will be ready to renounce the earthly vale of tears at the first call to enter the magnificent Realm of which we have been accorded this glimpse—the first step towards eternal glory.

Finally the reception drew to a close, and the many bright immortals who had thronged the thoroughfares of space in our immediate vicinity betook their way to other parts of the Realm. Our parents, who were the last to depart, besought us, as they took their leave, to call on them for any enlightenment we might desire from time to time. Their presence would be forthcoming at our mental demand.

With their departure the glorious

(Continued on page 188)

21 Jewel Burlington

Adjusted to the Second
Adjusted to Temperature
Adjusted to Isochronism
Adjusted to Positions
21 Ruby and Sapphire Jewels
25 Year Gold Strata Case
Your Choice of Dials
(Including Montgomery R. R. Dial)
New Ideas in Thin Cases

Only $1.00 Down

Only One Dollar Down, will buy this masterpiece of watch manufacture. The balance you are allowed to pay in small, easy monthly payments. A 21-Jewel Watch—is sold to you at a price much lower than that of other high-grade watches. Besides, you have the selection of the finest thin model designs and latest styles in watch cases. Write for FREE Watch Book and our SPECIAL OFFER today.

The Burlington "Petite"

This exquisite little 17-jewel ladies' wrist watch. A perfect timepiece. Beautiful, 14K Solid Green Gold case. Illustration is exact size of Burlington "Petite".

Send for this wonderful little bracelet watch. See how beautiful the dainty green gold case looks on your own wrist.

Write

While This Special Offer Lasts

Get the Burlington Watch Book—write today. Find out about this great special offer which is being made for only a limited time. You will know a great deal more about watch buying when you read this book. You will be able to "steer clear" of the over-priced watches which are no better. Write for Watch Book and our special offer TODAY!

Burlington Watch Company
19th St. and Marshall Blvd., Dept. A-139, Chicago
Canadian Address: 62 Albert St., Winnipeg, Manitoba

Please send me (without obligations and prepaid) your free book on watches with full explanation of your $1.00 down offer on the Burlington Watch.
Print name and address plainly

Name _____

Address _____

Complete Outfit

Violet Ray

ONLY $1.00 brings this complete, scientific Violet Rays outfit to you. Treat yourself and family at home, save delay, costly doctors and medicines. Thousands use Violet Rays at home to relieve pain and sickness. The identical outfits doctors have bought from us for years and with which they successfully treat many ailments, including those listed below.

QUICK RESULTS —No Medicine

Violet Rays work quickly—it's scientific, goes after the cause. That's why results are quick, permanent. Dr. Duncan, Kewanee, Ill. writes, "Violet Rays is the finest thing I ever used. . to relieve pain; treatments are so pleasant all my patients like it." Use it yourself at home, you save Doctor's bills.

Beauty Aid Brings natural, magnetic beauty of health, no dieting, exercise or drugs. FREE book tells in detail how high priced beauty specialists use it to improve scalp and skin.

EARN CASH

Men, women, without experience earn liberal profits in spare time showing Violet Rays to neighbors. Proves results first demonstration, sells on sight. Get attractive offer and wholesale prices now.

Send For FREE Book

Explains how Nikola Telsa discovered Violet Rays, how it works, why it heals. Tells what doctors and plain folks accomplish in conquering pain, disease and nervous trouble with Violet Rays.

Reveals Marvelous Scientific Discovery Shows charts of human body, explains where pains start, how to banish them. Offered FREE for a limited time only, to introduce Violet Rays. Send for FREE copy.

Check Your Ailment Below for Free Advice

Here is a partial list of ailments successfully treated with Violet Ray:

Catarrh	*Hay Fever*	*Piles*
Chilblains	*Headache*	*Rheumatism*
Colds	*Goitre*	*Skin Diseases*
Constipation	*Insomnia*	*Sore Throat*
Earaches	*Lumbago*	*Sprains*
Eczema	*Nervousness*	*Tonsilitis*
Eye Diseases	*Neuritis*	*Whooping Cough*
Falling Hair	*Paralysis*	*Asthma*

VI-REX COMPANY Chicago

Mail coupon—Send no money

VI-REX COMPANY,
211 So. Peoria Street, Dept. 655, Chicago

Please send me without cost or obligation your free book describing your VI-REX Violet Ray outfits, and details of your $1.00 offer.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ *State* _____

(Continued from page 186)

scene we had beheld, totally vanished. We are now on our journey through the passageway to the southern opening. On our arrival there we are promised another greeting by the souls of the Realm. Fate has decreed that Athalie and I shall spend our future mortal existence together in a purely spiritual companionship. At intervals we are accompanied by our parents; frequently by others; and, now and then, by Arlo and Mera, who remain faithful to us, but we shall soon lose them. Their terms in the Immediate Hereafter will shortly expire and they will ascend, as millions of others have done, and are continually doing, to higher regions in the mighty Realm of Eternity and Immortality. We shall miss them, and mourn their loss as we do the earthly friends who die.

And now, my dearest friend and comrade, my message is finished. Hereafter when you gaze upon the Aurora Borealis, that lovely celestial display, by whose fascinating and bewildering variations the northern heavens are flooded with mingled shades of light and color, creating luminous fires before which the fairest and most beautiful of other earthly scenes must pale and fade into insignificance, remember whose dwelling place is in the current from whence it originates, and think of Athalie and of me.

"Farewell!"

ONLY SOUND

A critic went by request to hear a certain politician make a speech.

"Well," said the politician, after he'd got through, "well, how was it?"

"Sound, very sound," said the critic.

"Yes," said the politician, and then, hungry for more he beamed and added, "Sound, and what else?"

"Nothing else," said the critic.—Los Angeles Times.

The parson was talking to the baby of the house.

"Why is it that the grass and trees look greener than usual today?" asked the good man.

"Because mother washed the windows this morning when she heard you were coming, sir," was the child's reply.

"Business is so quiet that we better have a special sale," said the shoe merchant.

"All right," said the store manager, "what shall it be?"

"Well," said the boss, "take that line of $5 shoes and mark them down from $10 to $8.50."

Stop Whiskey

An Odorless and Tasteless Treatment

Any lady can give it secretly at home in tea, coffee or food, and it costs nothing to try! If you have a husband, son, brother, father or friend who is a victim of whiskey, beer or wine, send your name and address to Dr. J. W. Haines Co., 432 Glenn Bldg., Cincinnati, Ohio, and they will send you absolutely free, in plain wrapper, a trial package of this wonderful treatment. Write today and be thankful all your life.

She Found A Pleasant Way To Reduce Her Fat

Thousands of overfat people have greatly reduced their weight and attained a normal figure by following the advice of others who use and recommend the **Marmola Prescription Tablets.** These harmless little fat reducers are prepared in tablet form from the same ingredients that formerly composed the famous Marmola Prescription for fat reduction.

If you are too fat, you owe it to yourself to give these fat reducers a fair trial. All the better drug stores the world over sell **Marmola Prescription Tablets** at one dollar per package. Ask your druggist for them or send one dollar to the Marmola Co., 643 Garfield Bldg., Detroit, Mich., and secure a package of these tablets. They are harmless and reduce your weight without going through long sieges of tiresome exercise and starvation diet. If you are too fat try this today.

Life's Secrets!

Amazing new book, "Safe Counsel," just out, tells you the things you want to know straight from the shoulder. Gives advice to newly married. Explains anatomy of reproductive organs, impotence, laws of Sex-Life, mistakes to avoid, diseases, pregnancy, etc. Contains 9 startling sections: 1—Science o' Eugenics, 2—Love, 3—Marriage, 4—Childbirth, 5—Family Life, 6—Sexual Science, 7—Diseases and Disorders, 8—Health and Hygiene, 9—Story of Life. In all, 104 chapters, 77 illustrations, 512 pages. Examine at our risk. Mailed in a plain wrapper.

Send No Money

Write for your copy today. Don't send a cent. Pay postman only $1.98, plus postage, on arrival. Money refunded if not satisfactory.

FRANKLIN ASSOCIATION
Dept. 1085 61 E. Madison St., Chicago, Ill.

$50,000.00 REWARD

Be a Finger Print Expert. Learn *SCOTLAND YARD METHODS.* Big Pay. Enormous Rewards. We teach you How and arrange a connection for you as soon as you have finished our course. Send today for Free Booklet telling about *SCOTLAND YARD,* and how to become a Finger Print Expert.

UNITED DETECTIVE TR. INST.
254 Dinan Bldg. Detroit, Mich.

EARN MONEY AT HOME

YOU can make $15 to $60 weekly in your spare time writing show cards. No canvassing or soliciting. We instruct you by our new simple Directograph System, supply you with work and pay you cash each week. Write today for full particulars and free booklet.

WEST-ANGUS SHOW CARD SERVICE LIMITED
Authorized Capital $1,250,000.00
122 Colborne Building, Toronto, Can.

LONESOME—World's greatest club for lonesome people, largest, best; established many years. Thousands attractive, congenial, wealthy members everywhere, worth $4,000 to $400,000, willing to correspond. Honorable, sincere people write. I will send you free, hundreds complete descriptions. One may be your "Ideal." Am making many happy. Quick results guaranteed, try me. Old Reliable Successful Club, Hon. Ralph Hyde, 194-A, San Francisco.

This Month's Big Hits!

The Latest Fox Trots, Songs and Waltzes

SONGS

Mr. Radio Man
California (Here I Come)
Dream Daddy
Whose Izzy Is He
It's a Man Ev'ry Time, It's a Man
Linger Awhile

WALTZES

Serenade
Marcheta

FOX TROTS

The One I Love
Hula Lou
Raggedy Ann
Say It Again
Song of the Volga Boatmen
Someone Loves You After All
So This Is Venice
Somewhere in the World

All 16 Selections—*for only* $2.98

On Eight Full-Size 10 inch Double-Face Records

Here is a complete library of the newest and biggest hits in the music world. 16 wonderful songs, fox trots and waltzes that are sweeping the country, the most popular songs of TODAY, played by wonderful orchestras, sung by accomplished artists. The most wonderful phonograph record bargain you have ever seen made possible by quantity production and direct selling. Every record 10-inch size. Every record guaranteed manufactured of highest quality material, and to be satisfactory in every way.

These are the songs that are being sung, whistled and played everywhere; fox trots and waltzes that are being danced to all over the country; that are right now, today, the biggest hits on Broadway. Do not miss this wonderful opportunity; remember that these are brand-new, 10-inch records.

Send No Money - 10 Days Trial

Try these wonderful records in your own home for 10 days. Note the beauty of recording, the clearness of tone, the catchiness of the tunes, the wonderful volume of music. See how smooth and durable these records are. You will wonder how we can give such a tremendous bargain. Quantity production, and selling direct-from-factory-to-you; that is the whole secret. This is the greatest selection of hits ever put out at one time, and this low price makes it the biggest record bargain ever offered. Send no money now. Just mail coupon or letter. Give the postman $2.98 plus the few cents delivery charges. Then play all the records on your own machine. If not pleased return the records and we will refund your money plus postage both ways. This offer may never be repeated, so mail coupon at once.

National Music Lovers, Inc.
218 West 40th Street Dept. 2214 New York City

National Music Lovers, Inc., Dept. 2214, 218 West 40th St., New York
Please send me for 10 days trial your collection of 16 very latest songs, fox trots and walzes on eight double-face ten-inch records, guaranteed equal to any records made. I will pay the postman only $2.98 plus delivery charges on arrival. This is not to be considered a purchase, however. If the records do not come up to my expectations, I reserve the right to return them at any time within 10 days and you will refund my money.
(Outside U. S. $3.75, cash with order.)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

☐ If you like the great songs from Grand Opera you may also care to have four of the most popular airs ever written. *La Donna e Mobile* from Rigoletto; *Medley of Pinafore songs; Habanera* from Carmen; and *Soldiers' Chorus* from Faust. All beautifully sung by great artists with full orchestra. If you care to have these great Grand Opera Songs in ADDITION to the set listed above place an X in the square at the left. The price is only 89c for all four selections. *Sold only* with the set advertised above—not sold separately.

I want to Pay You $85 a week
Man or Woman
Send for my proposition. I pay men and women $85.00 weekly to as high as $36.00 per day for either all or spare time help. No experience necessary.
Sell PRINCESS RADIUM LINGERIE
Charming ladies lingerie and hosiery, pretty, low priced, sells on sight, actually. Miss Grace James averaged $36 a day, spare time; R. G. Thompson earned $33 in one day. You can do as well. We tell you how.
Profits in Advance
Your profits in advance, we ship and collect. You show goods and mail us the orders. Nothing in any store compares in beauty and value to "Princess Radium" lingerie and hosiery.
High Grade-Steady
Unusual opportunity for big cash quick, write for plan and exclusive territory, build a steady income for life. District managers wanted, territorial rights going fast, don't delay, write now.
Free
Handsome photos from actual models and samples of genuine "PRINCESS RADIUM" silk, free.
ROBERTS-FRANK & CO
1735 Irving Park Blvd
DEPT
CHICAGO

Fat Folks Reduce!

Wash Your Fat Away With La-Mar Reducing Soap

The new discovery. Results quick and amazing—nothing internal to take. Reduce any part of body desired without affecting other parts. No dieting or exercising. Be as slim as you wish. Acts like magic in reducing double chin, abdomen, ungainly ankles, unbecoming wrists, arms and shoulders, large breasts or any superfluous fat on body. Sold direct to you by mail, postpaid, on a money-back guarantee. Price 50c a cake or three cakes for $1.00; one to three cakes usually accomplish its purpose. Send cash or money-order today. You'll be surprised at results. Address

La-Mar Laboratories

527 Beckman Building Cleveland, O.

MAKE MONEY AT HOME

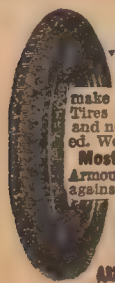
Detroit Show Card Studios,
254 Dinan Bldg., Detroit, Mich.

Dear Sirs—Without further obligation please send me your FREE illustrated Book giving full particulars how I can make $15 to $50 a week at Home in my SPARE TIME, WITHOUT CANVASSING. Also your GUARANTEE to teach me how, furnish me with WORK and pay me CASH EACH WEEK no matter where I live.

(PRINT NAME AND ADDRESS)

NAME ----------

STREET---------- CITY---------- STATE------



Sell TIRES DIRECT FROM FACTORY

We want an auto owner in each locality to advertise Armour Cords. You can make big money and get your own sample Tires Free, by sending us orders from friends and neighbors. No capital or experience needed. We deliver & collect dir— Pay you daily.

Most Liberal Tire Guarantee Ever Written

Armour Cords guaranteed by Indemnity Bond against Blow Out, Wear and Tear, Stone Bruise, Tread Separation, Blistering and Rim Cut for 12,500 miles. We are actual manufacturers. Write today for great Special Offer to Agents, and low Factory Prices.

ARMOUR TIRE & RUBBER CO., Dept. 618 Dayton, O.

ODD FACTS

In a ton of water from the Atlantic Ocean there are 31 pounds of salt. In the same quantity of water from the Dead Sea there are 187 pounds.

There are firms in Germany producing 10 to 50 tons of carbide per day in order to convert the acetylene into acetic acid and acetone, the latter being intended chiefly for the production of synthetic rubber.

The polar bear is untamable. He is also partial to a sun bath.

The translation of the Bible into English took three years between 1607-1611.

Yokohama, the great Japanese seaport recently destroyed in the earthquake, was until 1854 an unimportant fishing village.

It is said that in twenty-four hours a toad consumes an amount of food equal to four times the capacity of his stomach.

There are some who claim that William H. Taft was put into the presidential chair by a donkey, and this is how it happened. It was Mr. Taft's opportunity to swing a doubtful state into line for him or lose it to the opposition, and he was talking as only Taft can talk. "Who is there," he finally cried, "who will lift a voice against the truth of my statement?" Just then a donkey on the outskirts of the crowd gave vent to one of the piercing hee-haws of his tribe. The laugh was against the speaker for the moment, but Taft was equal to the occasion. Assuming an air of triumph and raising his voice above the din he boomed out: "I knew nobody but a jackass would try it."

A man who was very near-sighted went to have his eyes tested. After asking him to repeat the letters on the test card without success, the specialist grew impatient and left the room.

Five minutes later he returned with the lid from a dustbin. He put it near the near-sighted man and said: "Here, can you see this?"

"Yes," said the man.

"What is it?" asked the specialist.

"Well, it's either a half dollar or a quarter," was the unexpected reply.

Efficient Expert—You are wasting too much time on your personal appearance.

Stenographer—It's not wasted. I've only been here six months and I'm already engaged to the junior partner.

Free—To Try
Send for Trial Bottle

Don't Be Gray

When I can stop it

To let gray hair spoil your looks, by making you seem old, is so unnecessary when Mary T. Goldman's Hair Color Restorer will bring back the original color surely and safely. Very easily applied—you simply comb it through the hair. No greasy sediment to make your hair sticky or stringy, nothing to wash or rub off — just beautiful, natural, becoming hair.

My Restorer is a clear, colorless liquid, clean as water. No danger of streaking or discoloration, restored color is even and natural in all lights. Faded or discolored hair restored just as successfully and naturally as gray hair.

Mail Coupon Today

Send today for the absolutely Free Trial package which contains a trial bottle of Mary T. Goldman's Hair Color Restorer and full instructions for making the convincing test on one lock of hair. Indicate color of hair with X. Print name and address plainly. If possible, enclose a lock of your hair in your letter.

FREE TRIAL COUPON

Please print your name and address—
Mary T. Goldman,
173-D Goldman Bldg., St. Paul, Minn.

Please send your patented Free Trial Outfit. X shows color of hair. Black..... dark brown..... medium brown..... auburn (dark red)..... light brown..... light auburn (light red)..... blonde.....

Name ----------

Street----------*City*----------

LOWEST PRICES IN U. S. A.

Brand-New
Swing-Out Hand Ejector
Left-hand Wheeler
32 cal. $14.50
32-20 or 38 cal. $14.75

A Real "HE MAN" Gun
Finest 1924 Model
Cal. 32, 32-20 or 38
Nickel or Blue Steel
6 Shot
Shoots Standard American Ammunition

Most powerful 6-shot gun made. Used by Police and secret service. A straight shooting, hard hitting "regular" gun. Has wonderful balance and smooth action. Made of best blue steel rifled barrel, automatic hammer, and safety.

Beware of Imitations

We can also furnish a brand-new model of exactly similar appearance with inspection plate and automatic Hammer Safety, in nickel or blue for

$12.75 in cal. 32, 32-20 or 38

Prices on all other revolvers cut to the bone

World Famous Genuine Mauser pistol, 25 cal., 10 shot.....$11.75
Genuine German Luger, 30 cal., 9 shot, value $50; our price $15.45
Top Break Automatic Ejecting Double Action Revolver, 32 cal., 5 shot. Price.....$7.85
38 cal., 5 shot. Price $8.25

Send No Money. Pay postman **Bargain** price plus a few cents postage. Money immediately refunded, if not satisfied.

AMERICAN BARGAIN HOUSE
79 Fourth Ave., Dept. A-50, New York, N. Y.

MAKE MONEY AT HOME

YOU CAN make $1 to $2 an hour writing show cards at home in your spare time. Quickly and easily learned by our new simple method. No canvassing or soliciting. We show you how, guarantee you work at home no matter where you live and pay you cash each week. Full particulars and booklet free. Write to-day.
AMERICAN SHOW CARD SYSTEM LTD.
Authorized and Fully Paid Capital, $1,000,000
221 Adams Bldg. Toronto, Canada

The Stars Influence Your Life!

Astrology, Science of All Ages. Send birth date for reading. Enclose 25c (to cover postage, cost of notice, etc.). MIRA STUDIO, W. T. Box 832, Arcade Station, Los Angeles, Calif.

Table of Contents

The contents of Weird Tales is fully protected by copyright and must not be reproduced either wholly or in part without permission from the publishers. All communications should be addressed to the publishers' main office at 854 North Clark St., Chicago, Ill. Subscription, $2.00 a year in the United States; $2.50 in Canada. Single copies, 50c.

Why Weird Tales?—*Editorial* 1
Imprisoned With the Pharaohs—*Houdini* 3
"Whoso Diggeth a Pit"—*Vida Taylor Adams* 13
Deep Calleth—*Gordon Burns* 16
The Malignant Entity—*Otis Adelbert Kline* 19
The Sixth Tree—*Edith Lichty Stewart* 27
The Haunted Mansion in the Pines—*Leonard F. Schumann* 29
Spirits—*J. M. Alvey* 32
Hypnos—*H. P. Lovecraft* 33
Ebenezer's Casket—*J. U. Giesy and Junius B. Smith* 36
Draconda—*John Martin Leahy* 41
The Hand—*H. Francis Caskey* 50
The Loved Dead—*C. M. Eddy, Jr.* 54
The Vow on Halloween—*Lyllian Huntley Harris* 58
Eyes—*Galen C. Colin* 59
The Man Who Thought He Was Dead—*Granville S. Hoss* 61
Called Back—*Dan W. Totheron* 65
The Sunken Land—*George W. Bayly* 69
The Dancing Partner—*Guy L. Helms* 74
The Last Entry—*Meredith Beyers* 76
The Purple Death—*Edith Lyle Ragsdale* 77
The Impostor—*Norman Springer* 82
Weird Crimes—*Seabury Quinn* 87
Just Bones—*Samuel Stewart Mims* 91
First Degree—*Robert Cosmo Harding* 96
The Latvian—*Herman Fetzer* 101
The Machine from Outside—*Don Howard* 106
Dr. Grant's Experiment—*H. A. Noureddin Addis* 111
Tea Leaves—*Henry S. Whitehead* 116
An Egptian Lotus—*Mrs. Chetwood Smith* 121
Deep Sea Game—*Arthur J. Messier* 127
The Soul Mark—*H. C. Wire* 131
It—*E. M. Samson* 135
The Man Who Lived Next Door to Himself—*Frank Owen* 139
Mystery River—*Elwin J. Owens* 143
The God Yuano—*Marjorie Darter* 145
The Cellar—*Paul L. Anderson* 147
In the Weird Light—*Edward Everett Wright and Ralph Howard Wright* 152
A Glimpse Beyond—*H. M. Hamilton* 164
Ask Houdini 167

Courtesy of "True Romances"

LIFE'S Greatest Problem

HAVE you been so unfortunate as to reach maturity without knowing the vital, fundamental facts about life? Are you making mistakes that may wreck your future happiness? Do you yearn to lift the curtain of mystery and learn the truth about sex matters? Every man and woman has the right to know the facts.

Only a few years ago it was considered virtuous to be ignorant of the most important facts of life. Girls were carefully shielded from all knowledge. Boys were left ignorant until they learned dangerous half-truths from the lips of other boys. Most men and women today still regard sex as a mystery and must suffer from the untold dangers of ignorance.

What Do YOU Know?

Do you know the secrets of a happy marriage? The mistakes every couple should avoid? What true love really means? Causes of divorce? How to tell your children the beautiful story of the origin of life? The things every man and woman should know? Dangers of ignorance? How to perpetuate the honeymoon? The qualities that charm and never fade?

The Truth At Last

For years there has been a need for a book that got right down to brass tacks and explained the mysteries of life without fear or "beating around the bush". This startling 512-page book, "Safe Counsel", written by Prof. B. G. Jefferis, M. D. Ph. D., and Prof. J. L. Nichols, A. M., contains an amazingly clear and clean account of the puzzling problems of Sex-Life. You see what happens when the Laws of Nature are violated. You are taken step by step through courtship, marriage and motherhood. You are given a firm grasp on many of the burning questions of the day. Words are not minced. "Polite" phrases are forgotten. The right word is used in the right place.

In this remarkable volume are answered all the questions that growing children ask their parents—that brides want answered on the eve of their wedding—that youths approaching manhood demand of their elders. You owe it to yourself, to your happiness and your health to read this wonderful book.

Send No Money

—simply mail the coupon

Don't send any money. Merely fill-in and mail the coupon below. We'll send this amazing 512 page book at once—without a penny in advance. When the book arrives, pay the postman the bargain price, $1.98, plus a few cents postage. Look the book over. If you are not more than pleased, return it and we will refund your money at once.

Mail the Coupon NOW!

Franklin Association
81 East Madison St., Dept. 2035 Chicago, Ill.

Please send me your amazing 512-page book, "Safe Counsel," in a plain wrapper marked "Personal." I will pay the postman $1.98, plus postage upon arrival. If I'm not satisfied, I'll return the book within 5 days and you are to refund my money.

Name.....

Street or R. F. D......

City..... *State*.....

(Price outside of U. S.—$2.22 cash with order)

C.O.D. shipments are often delayed. If you want to be sure of getting book sooner, send cash with order.

Learn to Play in 1 hour

on the sweet sounding Hawaiian Ukulele or the Banjo Ukulele

by our copyrighted New Short-Cut Method. No knowledge of note-reading or musical keys required. No months of tiresome practice. New Short-Cut Method accomplishes in *one hour* as much as $15 and $20 Ukulele Courses requiring months of instruction and practice. You can get this astonishingly simple and easy method

FREE *with either of these wonderful Bargains*

on which you can save 50%. ONE HOUR after you pick up your instrument you will be playing, not exercises, but rich, sweet accompaniment to popular songs and amusing ditties. New Method is so easy and simple that ten-year-old children can use it.

$6.00 *Value* for **Only $2.98** **"The Flapper" Model**

Thousands Amazed and Delighted!

Over 10,000 people have tried our New Short-Cut Method of Ukulele instruction, and have been amazed and delighted with the surprisingly quick results. There's no magic to it—just a new principle of instruction that does away with the months of laborious monotonous practice, the learning of notes, keys and musical signs. *You don't have to read a single note under this New Method.* We have hundreds of unsolicited letters from grateful pupils praising the course and the beautiful instruments that go with it. Mrs. O. Brown, of Philadelphia, Pa., writes: "The New Short-Cut Course makes it all very easy, I am very much pleased." C. C. Jacinto, of Waipahu Iahu, Hawaii, says "Your Ukulele is a much better value than anything I can get in Hawaii." Wm. T. Campbell, of Englewood, N. J. writes: "With your Short-Cut Course I got such exceedingly good results from your Ukulele, that I want another just like it." You, too, can learn to play the Ukulele in ONE HOUR as these people have done. You, too, will be delighted with the handsome attractive instrument you will get at a saving of 50%. Remember, you don't have to risk a penny. Just send the coupon below TODAY!

Beautiful Hawaiian Ukulele

By purchasing the *entire output* of a large manufacturer, we are able to offer this genuine Koawood finish Hawaiian Ukulele, *full size*, a real *$6.00 value*, for only $2.98. And with this price smashed bargain we are giving FREE our copyrighted New Short-Cut Method by which we *guarantee* you will be able to play in ONE HOUR. This attractive instrument is of finest workmanship, handsomely finished, and deep and rich in tone. It provides sweet harmonious accompaniment to impromptu singing—on the beach, in the parlor, on picnics. If you strum harmony on this Ukulele, you will be popular everywhere. Send the coupon below for it *today*.

$10.00 *Value* for **Only $4.98** **"The Shiek" Model**

Handsome Banjo Ukulele

(Back view showing beautifully carved sounding board)

An amazing bargain—a full *$10.00 value* for only $4.98. You will fall in love with this handsome instrument on sight. Combines the sweet harmony of the Ukulele with jazzy twang of the banjo. Genuine calf-skin drum head held tight with black enameled steel band. Made of beautiful mahogany wood, with attractive hollywood inlay around edge, side, and down fingerboard. Perfectly fretted. Rosewood pegs containing natural oils which prevent slipping. Mahogany sounding board on back, with scroll work design, adds, depth, volume and resonance to tone. And with this astonishing value goes our FREE New Short-Cut Method which teaches you to play in ONE HOUR. Here is the value of a lifetime! Fill out the coupon and mail it TODAY!

Guarantee!

With each instrument and free Short-Cut Course goes our guarantee:

1. We *guarantee* that you can play the Ukulele or Banjo Ukulele in ONE HOUR by following the simple directions of our New Short-Cut Method.
2. We *guarantee* that each instrument is exactly as represented or your money will be refunded.

Send No Money!

Don't send a penny. Simply indicate on the coupon which instrument you desire, and mail the coupon TODAY. When the instrument and the FREE Short-Cut Method arrive, deposit with the postman one bargain price amount, plus a few pennies postage. Then try out in your home both the instrument and Short-Cut Method. If you are not satisfied, return them within three days, and your money will be refunded. You will be the judge. You don't have to risk a single penny. Don't miss this opportunity—save 50% on either of these two great bargains and at the same time learn to play the Ukulele in One Hour. Fill out coupon and mail.

Ferry & Co. Dept. 3935
630 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, Ill.

Please send me:

- ☐ Koawood finish Hawaiian Ukulele and FREE New Short-Cut Method. $2.98
- ☐ Mahogany Banjo Ukulele and FREE New Short-Cut Method . . $4.98

I am to deposit with the postman on arrival.....plus a few pennies postage. If am not satisfied, within three days, I can return the instrument and the course, and my money will be refunded.

Name.....

Address.....

City..... *State*.....

☐ Mark X here if you wish beautiful Macintosh Waterproof Bag (or 89c addional.

Are You Afraid To Love?

Is Sex a Mystery To You?

Has true love come into your life — or didn't you recognize it when it came? Are you afraid now of the baffling, perplexing mysteries of sex relationship? Are you discontented with the stupid lies and furtive ashamed answers the world gives you in place of the naked, fearless truth you desire? Do you want some safe, sane, unashamed advice on sex questions? Do you hesitate asking your doctor certain questions? Then clip the coupon below, send it today without any money and in a few days you will receive the most startling surprise of your life.

Does a petting party stop with a kiss or does it go further? Is spooning dangerous? At last the question is answered. See "Safe Counsel" Page 199.

Life's Mysteries Revealed

YOUR QUESTIONS — all of them, the most intimate — all are answered in simple, straightforward fearless language. Here are the real facts about the so-called mystery of sex—the things you should know about YOURSELF, about YOUR BODY, your DESIRES and YOUR IMPULSES.

At last a book has been published that digs into sex matters without fear or beating around the bush. This startling 512 page book, "Safe Counsel", written by Prof. B. G. Jefferis, M. D. Ph. D. and Prof. J. L. Nichols, A. M. contains just the information you want. You will be amazed at its frankness. Words are not minced. "Polite" phrases are forgotten —the right word is used in the right place. In this remarkable volume are answered all the questions that brides want answered on the eve of their weddings—that youths approaching manhood demand of their elders — that married people should know. The naked facts are told. Ruthlessly! Daringly! But truthfully!

"It Might Have Been Prevented"

How pitifully often do we hear this pathetic phrase. Glorious young lives are wrecked by ignorance and falsehood. Innocent children suffer as a result of prudishness and "modesty." We think we are an enlightened, civilized people—but we will continue to be in the dark ages until every adult knows the truth about the functions and purposes of his body, and about that great powerful invisible force, the Life Urge.

Would You Like to Know:

- —The secrets of a happy marriage?
- —The mistakes every couple should avoid?
- —What true love really means?
- —How to perpetuate the honey moon?
- —Law of mutual attraction?
- —If continence is desirable?
- —How to control your impulses?
- —Answers to sex problems?
- —Dangers of ignorance?
- —Advice to the newly married?
- —Signs of excesses?
- —What every girl should know?
- —The reasons for marital unhappiness?
- —How to hold your husband's love?
- —The prevention and cure of social diseases?
- —Mistakes often fatal?
- —Ethics of the unmarried?
- —What every young man should know?
- —Advice to expectant mothers?

These are just few of the questions answered truthfully and authoritatively by "Safe Counsel"

The Truth At Last!

Safe Counsel contains nine startling sections: 1. The Science of Eugenics; II. Love; III. Marriage; IV. Childbirth; V. Family Life; VI. Sexual Science; VII. Diseases and Disorders; VIII. Principles of Health and Hygiene; IX. The Story of Life. Here are just a few of the subjects discussed — Love, Anatomy and Physiology, A Word to Maidens, Maternity, Parental Influences, Change of Life, Impotence, Fighting Modern Evils. You owe it to yourself, to your happiness and your health to read this wonderful book.

Nobody can escape sex problems. Men and women—rich and poor—all face the sex question. Do not let ignorance blight your life. Do not allow fear and superstition to mar your happiness. Knowledge will free you—give you security, self-confidence and courage to face life without the shadow of fear and doubt threatening your peace of mind.

Send No Money—

Simply Mail the Coupon

Ignorance perverts the mind. Don't stay ignorant any longer. Send for this invaluable book today—and settle your problems now.

Just clip the coupon. Send it in today. No money is required. In a few days when the postman brings you "Safe Counsel" (in a plain wrapper) you can pay him $1.98 and postage. If you are not thoroughly satisfied after examination, return the book and we will refund your money. Send the coupon immediately. Mail it today to the Franklin Association, 81 East Madison Street, Dept. 3015 Chicago.

FRANKLIN ASSOCIATION
81 East Madison Street, Dept. 3015 Chicago

Please send me your amazing 512-page book, "Safe Counsel" in a *plain wrapper* marked "Personal." I will pay the postman $1.98, plus postage, upon arrival. If I'm not satisfied, I'll return it within 5 days and you refund my money.

Name----------

Street or R.F.D.----------

City---------- *State*----------

(Price outside U. S.—$2.22 cash with order)

C. O. D. shipments are often delayed. If you want to be sure of getting book sooner, send cash with order

Your Glands Wear Out!

100% Test Actual Gland Substance, Directly Absorbed. Look and Feel Young at 70. Science Has Solved the Secrets of the Glands and Now for the First Time Shows You the True Way to Keep or Regain Both Your Mental and Physical Vigor by Replenishing the Most Important Glands. Results in a Day.

Demonstration Treatment Sent Free

Tablets Have Been Found too Slow in Results When Used Alone. The Lewis System Is Therefore a Combination Treatment and Does Not Depend Upon Any One Form of Gland Replenishment for Sure and Quick Results.

You Owe It to Your Own Manhood (or Womanhood) to at Least Try THE LEWIS SYSTEM of COMBINED TREATMENT, Especially as It Is NOW OFFERED TO YOU FREE FOR TRIAL, With No Obligation Now or Ever.

Throw Away Your "Tonics" and Alcoholic "Medicines." Try This Greatest of All Health Builders.

The Lewis Gland Treatment is absolutely original in every particular and nothing like it has ever been known in medical science.

This Combination Method is far ahead of any "Medicine" — "Tonic"— or stimulant ever used in the past. In one week's time it will accomplish more in the cases for which it is intended than a year's doctoring with any other form of treatment or drugs known.

And in order to introduce the Lewis Method quickly, we will send Demonstration Treatments entirely FREE without one penny of expense now or ever to those who will send for them.

We Prove the Truth of Every Statement by Sending These Treatments Absolutely Free.

We will prove to you FREE beyond reasonable doubt, that the Lewis Method of Gland Growth and Rejuvenation is the most wonderful treatment for the renewing of strength and vigor that has ever been conceived.

It is based entirely on the principle of actually renewing and rejuvenating the Glands.

This Method is advocated and endorsed by the leading students of gland therapy throughout the world—including Dr. Arnold Lorand who is generally conceded to be the greatest living authority on this subject.

What You May Expect

The Lewis Method will positively Rebuild and Replace worn and wasted gland tissue. It will increase vitality both physical and mental. It will renew strength, especially as to the functioning of the glands. It will increase your endurance and render you less liable to fatigue. It will improve your general health, and in most cases cause a marked improvement in your appearance. Your appetite will increase and you will almost surely gain in weight if you are at present in a "run-down" condition.

It is especially recommended to men for Prostatic troubles, Liver, Kidney and Bladder disorders and Rheumatism, both muscular and joint.

Send for your Demonstration Treatment NOW.

All our correspondence and all packages sent by us come to you in plain, sealed containers.

The LEWIS TREATMENT Almost Never Fails

If you have tried other forms of medical treatment without relief and have despaired of finding anything helpful, then you are the very one above all others to whom we will most gladly send one of our Demonstration Treatments. All you are asked to do is to Test this new Method in your home and at our expense. Surely you will not permit any doubt or prejudice to stand in your way when such a liberal offer as this is made you.

A Special Combination Treatment for Women Also

You will notice in the coupon that we ask whether the treatment is intended for male or female.

This is necessary because the two treatments are absolutely different as to formulas. The female treatment is particularly recommended for the ailments to which women are most commonly subject. Any Physician will testify as to the wonderful value of Lutein for women's troubles and will also understand that this substance would be of no benefit if administered in a treatment for men. We mention this one point of difference to emphasize the fact that the Lewis Treatment for Women is especially prepared for that sex.

A Private, Personal HOME Treatment Superior to Anything Ever Before Known

This Coupon Entitles You to a 2 Days Demonstration Treatment Absolutely FREE

LEWIS LABORATORIES,
108 No. Dearborn St., Dept. 549, CHICAGO, ILL.

Please send me at once one of your Demonstration Treatments for the Replacement by Renewal of Worn or Wasted Glands.
My age is _____
This, to be sent me in plain wrapper and entirely without cost or obligation on my part. I wish treatment for
(Mark a cross before the one you wish.) _____ Male
_____ Female
Note:—(If you wish, please enclose 10 cts. for postage and packing.)

Name _____

Address _____

Town _____ State _____